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MŌRĀN 'ETH'Ō

18

Dr. MAR APREM

**THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**



St. EPHREM ECUMENICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SEERI)

BAKER HILL, KOTTAYAM - 686 001

KERALA, INDIA

2003



THE AUTHOR

**THE HISTORY OF THE ASSYRIAN
CHURCH OF THE EAST IN THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY**

By

Dr. Mar Aprem Mookan B.D., M.Th., S.T.M., D.Th., Ph.D.



St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI)
Baker Hill, Kottayam, Kerala, India - 686 001

JANUARY 2003

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THE HISTORY OF THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF
THE EAST IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SYRIAC
LITERATURE IN KERALA

A thesis submitted to

THE MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY, KOTTAYAM

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) IN SYRIAC

By

Dr. Mar Aprem Mookan B.D., M.Th., S.T.M., D.Th.

ST. EPHREM ECUMENICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
KOTTAYAM, KERALA, INDIA

OCTOBER 2000

The History of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Twentieth Century

The first Ph.D. dissertation from SEERI

By

Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem Mookan

B.D., M.Th., S.T.M., D.Th., Ph.D.

Metropolitan Palace

Trichur 680 001, Kerala, India

Phone : 91 - 487 - 2420978

E-mail : aprem@vsnl.com

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بِسْمِ

الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا الذي كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله *
* * *

هو الذي هدانا لهذا الذي كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله *
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سَمِعْتُ مِنْ رَبِّي أَنَّ مَنْ كَتَبَ كِتَابًا

بِحَقِّ حَقِّهِ

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بِحَقِّ حَقِّهِ

EDITORIAL

This number of MORAN ETH'O is special on more than one count. Its contents are the fruit of research done by the eminent Metropolitan Archbishop of the **Assyrian Church of the East**, Mar Aprem. It is also the first doctoral thesis prepared under the direction of the Director of SEERI, Dr. Jacob Thekeparambil and presented to the Mahatma Gandhi University at Kottayam for Doctorate in Syriac Language and Literature.

It deals with the history of the Church of which the author is the Archbishop in India. The Church traces its history right back to apostolic times; this thesis however is confined to the 20th Century. After the First World War, the Church was decimated and went into diaspora spread over Europe, America, Australia, New Zealand etc. The ecumenical shift into close collaboration with the Vatican during the final decade of the century is a particularly noteworthy historical development. All the important events in this Church during the last century are mentioned and discussed herein. Some precious Syriac documents preserved at Trichur have been translated into English and used in this thesis.

The esteemed readers of MORAN ETH'O are sure to benefit by the pioneering research done by Archbishop Mar Aprem - The editors are delighted to inform our subscribers that the Mahatma Gandhi University has accepted this thesis and decided to confer the Ph.D. degree on the author, who become the first Doctor from SEERI.

Kottayam, Kerala
January 2003

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is a bonafide record of research work done by me and that no part of the thesis has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title of any other University.

Kottayam,
20 October, 2000.

Mar Aprem Mooken

Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “*The History Of The Assyrian Church Of The East In The 20th Century With Special Reference To The Syriac Literature In Kerala*” is a record of studies and research carried out by Dr. Mar Aprem, under my supervision and guidance and that no part of this thesis has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship, title or recognition.

Fr. Dr. Jacob Thekeparambil
SEERI, Kottayam.

20 October, 2000.

Kerala.

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His Holiness Mar Khanania Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, who encouraged me in many ways to do this research.

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Library of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, for allowing me to read in that library in October 1999.

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Prof. K.A. Ignatius for correcting the language.

Dr. J. F. Coakley of Harvard, USA for arranging for me to read rare mission reports in the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Different Spellings

Different writers according to their preference have used some Proper names. Since it is not advisable to change the spellings of the words especially in quotations, the following list is provided.

1. Abdisho, Avdeesho, Ebed Jesus
2. Abimalek, Awimalek
3. Abraham, Avraham, Oraham, Auraham
4. Aprem, Aprim, Ephrem
5. Bawai, Babai
6. Benyamin, Benjamin
7. Ishai, Eshai, Jesse
8. Ishoyav, Ishoyabh
9. Jaballaha, Yabhallaha, Yawalaha
10. Mariyam, Mariam, Mary
11. Poulouse, Polos
12. Qudshanis, Kochanes
13. Ruvel, Rewil, Reuban, Ruvil
14. Shimun, Simon, Shimon, Shamun
15. Timothy, Timotheus
16. Tiyari, Tyari
17. Trichur, Thrissur
18. Yohannan, Johannan, John
19. Yosip, Yausip, Joseph

CONTENTS

Sl. No.		Page. No.
	Title page in Syriac	5
	Declaration	7
	Certificate	8
	Acknowledgments	9
	Different Spellings	10

CHAPTER I

	INTRODUCTION	17
1.1	Previous Research	17
1.2	Objectives	20
1.3	Importance Of This Research	20
1.4	Details Of Procedure	20
1.5	Bibliography	21
1.6	Name Of The Church	22

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST SINCE THE TIME OF KING ABGAR UCHAMA IN THE FIRST CENTURY UNTIL THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

2.1	Introduction	25
2.2	The Early Period	25
2.3	The Middle Ages	30

2.4	The Split Under John Sulaqa 1553	32
2.5	The Synod of Diamper, 1599 AD	40
2.6	The 19th Century	51
2.7	A Statistics of the Assyrian Church in 1870 and in 1877	61

CHAPTER III

PERIOD OF DECLINE 1900 – 1918

FROM PATRIARCH MAR RUWEL SHIMUN UNTIL THE MURDER OF PATRIARCH MAR BENYAMIN SHIMUN

3.1	Introduction	69
3.2	The Patriarch's Death In 1903	73
3.3	Mar Benyamin Shimun As The New Patriarch	75
3.4	Van City	81
3.5	Before The First World War	84
3.6	The First World War	99
3.7	The Chaldean Catholics	111

CHAPTER IV

PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY 1918-1933

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE REIGN OF PATRIARCH MAR POULOSE SHIMUN TILL THE MASSACRE OF THE ASSYRIANS AT SIMALE, NORTHERN IRAQ IN AUGUST 1933

4.1	The Patriarch Mar Poulouse Shimun, 1918 - 1920	114
-----	--	-----

4.2	The Consecration Of The Patriarch Mar Ishai Shimun, 1920	117
4.3	The Visit Of Mar Timotheus To Iraq 1920 -1921	119
4.4	The Visit Of Mar Timotheus To England And America	128
4.5	The Visit Of Mar Timotheus To Iraq 1927 - 1928	152
4.6	The Assyrian Settlement In Iraq	157
4.7	The Assyrian Massacre, August 1933	159

CHAPTER V

PERIOD OF SUFFERINGS 1933 – 1975

FROM THE PERIOD OF EXILE OF PATRIARCH MAR ESHAI SHIMUN IN CYPRUS TILL HIS AS- SASSINATION IN 1975

5.1	Exile Of The Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun To Cyprus, August 1933	166
5.2	Death Of Mar Timotheus And Aftermath, 1945	168
5.3	The Church In Iran	171
5.4	The Split Of 1968	177
5.5	The Assassination Of The Patriarch Mar Ishai Shimun In November 1975	182

CHAPTER VI

ECUMENICAL ERA 1976 – 2000

FROM THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRESENT PATRIARCH MAR KHANANIA DINKHA IV TILL OCTOBER 2000

6.1	The Consecration Of The Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, 1976	186
6.2	The Holy Synods	192

6.3	The Present Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV	192
6.4	The Church In Australia And New Zealand	194
6.5	Saint Hurmizd's Parish	195
6.6	Mar Narsai Press, Thrissur	198
6.7	Ecumenical Contacts	200
6.7.1	Signing Of The Common Christological Declaration, 1994	203
6.7.2	The Assyrian - Chaldean Dialogue	204
6.7.3	Pro Oriente, Vienna	208
6.7.4	The Middle East Council Of Churches (MECC)	211
6.7.5	The Dialogue With The Coptic Church	213
6.7.6	Dialogue With The Syrian Orthodox Church	215

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS	217
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Chronology (1900- 2000)	222
Appendix 2	Common Christological Declaration	236
Appendix 3	Joint Synodal Decree For Promoting Unity	240
Appendix 4	Holy Synod Of April 1999	246
Appendix 5	Sacraments In The Syriac Tradition	250
Appendix 6	The Prelates Of The Church Of The East	255
Bibliography		256
Books by the Author		299
Map 1	Assyrian Churches, 600 AD	301

Map 2	Assyrian Churches, 1900 AD	302
Map 3	Assyrian Churches, 2000 AD	
	a. Europe And The Middle East	303
	b. India, Australia and New Zealand	304
	c. USA and Canada	305
Photos of Prelates		
	Late Prelates	306
	Present Prelates	308
About the Author		Back cover inside
Publications of SEERI		Back cover

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Previous Research

The history of the Assyrian Church of the East in the twentieth century has not been written so far. At the same time, students of the Church History will agree that the 20th century is a very eventful period in the history of this much-persecuted Church.

Professor John Joseph's book *The Nestorians And Their Muslim Neighbours* (Princeton University Press, 1961) deals with this topic in Part Two: The Twentieth Century. Although that is a very useful study, his twentieth century ends before the end of the first half of the twentieth century. Much water has flown under the rivers Euphrates and Tigris since then. The war between Iraq and Iran from 1980 to 1988 has increased the number of refugees from both countries. Iraq's occupation of Kuwait on 2nd August 1990 and the American bombing of Baghdad and suburbs in January 1991 have affected adversely the members of the Assyrian Church of the East.

While Dr. John Joseph's doctoral dissertation deals with the political scenario of the Assyrian people, a book by an Englishman Dr. J. F. Coakley (now working in Harvard, USA) *The Church of the East And The Church of England* deals with the ecclesiastical aspects of this Church. Some of his conclusions throw light on the contemporary history of the Church of the East.

Professor Joseph Yacoub Ph.D. who has written a comprehensive history of the Assyrian Church is an Assyrian born in Hassake, Syria and grew up in Beirut. He moved to Lyon, France in 1969 to pursue doctoral studies. Dr. Joseph Yacoub teaches political sciences at the Catholic University of Lyon. Most of his writings are in the French language. The book *The Assyrian*

Question published in English is the lecture presented by Prof. Joseph Yacoub on August 4, 1985 at the Assyrian Association in Chicago, USA.

Dr. Sargon Dadesho Ph.D. of California, USA has published extensively on the Assyrians of today in the journal he founded the *Bet Nahrain*. His book *The Assyrian National Question* published in 1987 in the USA has brought to light several relevant documents. His efforts through the radio and television have created a keen awareness of the Assyrian question not only in the Assyrians but in non-Assyrians also.

Another author who has written on the Assyrian Church and the Chaldean Church is Father Jean Maurice Fiey. Unfortunately, the scholarly works penned by this author are not available in English. All works of Fr. Fiey are in French. His book *Assyrie Chritienne: contribution a l'etude de l'histoire et de la geographie ecclesiastiques et monastiques du nord de l' Iraq* deals with the Christian Assyrian contribution to the study of ecclesiastical and monastic history and geography of Northern Iraq. This is a sort of encyclopaedia, which gives names of villages and of institutions, and churches of Christian communities in Northern Iraq. Vol.1, Part 1 is titled *Adiabene*. Part 2 *Marga*, Vol.2, Part 3 *Ba Nuhadra*, Vol.3 *Bet Germai, Bet Aramaye* and *Maisan Nestorians*.

Fr. Fiey's book *Syriac Christians under the Abbasids, principally in Baghdad (749-1258)* was published in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 420 subsidia, T.59 in 1980. It is a chronological history of the Syriac speaking Christian community under the Abbasid Caliphs. His book published in 1975 by *Corpus SCO* in 1975 (No.362, Subsidia 44) deals with the period of the 13th and 14th centuries under the Khans of Iran. A still earlier work of Fr. Fiey is *CSCO* (361 Subsidia 36) published in 1970 - "*Approaches To A History of The Church In Iraq.*" Another work of Fr. Fiey published by *CSCO*, No.388, Subsidia 54 in 1972 is *NISIBIS; The Eastern Syriac See And Its Suffragan Bishops From Its Origins To Our Times*. It deals with the history upto 1915.

The geographical area covered in the present dissertation is the whole world

wherever the Assyrian congregations are found today, from New Zealand to Canada, from England to India in addition to the traditional homeland comprising Iraq, Iran, Syria and Lebanon.

1900-2000 is the period covered in this book. During the year 2000 the ecumenical relations are excellent. The Assyrian Church of the East at present presents a better picture of the affairs of the Church.

The writer of this dissertation has first hand knowledge of the happenings in this Church during the past four decades. During the official meetings in the Church and participation in official and non-official ecumenical dialogues the present writer has gathered documents reliable enough to enable him to present a comprehensive history of this Church during the period 1900-2000.

A fairly strict chronological order is followed in writing the history of this much-persecuted Church. Two World Wars have devastated this community and displaced the Assyrians from their homeland in Turkey. At the end of the First World War in 1918, the Assyrians fled from their homeland in Turkey. At a later stage, many Assyrians left their homes in Northern Iraq and settled down near Baghdad.

Two Patriarchs namely Mar Benyamin Shimun and Mar Eshai Shimun (uncle and nephew) were shot dead in entirely different circumstances. At present, the hereditary succession followed in the patriarchal family has ended. The Church has decided not to consecrate bishops for tribes. Now bishops and metropolitans are consecrated for geographical areas such as cities and countries.

The history of the Assyrian Church in the twentieth century is divided into the following four periods for the purpose of this dissertation.

1. Mar Ruwel and Mar Benyamin Shimun 1900-1918
2. Mar Poulouse and Mar Eshai Shimun 1918-1933
3. Mar Eshai Shimun from his exile from Iraq to his death 1933-1975
4. Mar Khannania Dinkha IV to the present day 1976- 2000

1.2 Objectives

This is a scientific search into the documents as well as oral evidence. The secondary sources also have been used. Both secular and religious history has been discussed. It is impossible to separate religion and race in the case of the Assyrians.

Much has been said about the Assyrian tragedy of the First World War as well as that of the Massacre in 1933. This work is a probe into the reasons of these tragic events. As the Assyrian Church Of The East is involved in Ecumenical discussions today this study will help us to understand the actual situations of these Christians. They were shifted from their traditional homes to face challenges of the modern world.

1.3 Importance Of This Research

According to Dr. Sebastian Brock of Oxford, England, there is no such study available at present. Dr. Brock asked the present writer to give a lecture on this topic at the Oriental Institute, Oxford in May 1994. He encouraged the present writer to write a book on this topic, which would be useful for students of church history. Dr. J.F.Coakley of Harvard, USA, who has done extensive study on the Church of the East states that some accounts on the current history of the Assyrian Church are too confusing and conflicting. Such findings have made a study of this nature a must.

The present writer, who had studied Syriac language for liturgical purpose for more than four decades and had been part and parcel of the life and history of this Church since his ordination as Deacon on 25 June 1961, took up this challenge to fill up this gap.

1.4 Details Of Procedure

The writer of this dissertation wrote a B.D. thesis on Nestorius when he was

20 years old. Later in 1966 he wrote a Master's Thesis and also a Doctorate Thesis (D.Th.) in 1976. Several papers on this topic were written even after obtaining a doctorate.

This study is objective. The previous experience in historical research and methodology has helped the present writer to cast his net wider and to bring to light all aspects of the history of this Church and publications in Syriac and English.

Not only the library of the St.Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, Kottayam and the Metropolitan's Palace Library in Trichur (which incidentally has the largest collection of the Eastern Syriac books in India) were consulted, but also research was done in Rome, Lambeth, London, Harvard and other libraries of excellence in order to ensure a high scientific quality for this study.

The opportunity to prepare scholarly papers for Syriac Symposium in Germany (1980), Holland (1984), Cambridge (1992), Sydney in 2000 and the Oriental Canon Law in Freiburg, Germany (1983) and in Boston, USA (1995), Australasia Lumen conference in Melbourne in July 2000 etc.helped him to do scholarly research in this field.

1.5 Bibliography

Syriac books and manuscripts were consulted and English and Malayalam records were scrutinized in order to leave for posterity an accurate account of the history of this Church during 1900-2000 AD. As far as the Trichur Christian Community is concerned, 2000AD would mark the 204 years of settling this Christian community from the neighbourhood of Trichur.

Letters between the prelates, judgements of the civil courts, pamphlets and such secondary sources are essential for telling the story as objectively as possible.

The letters written and received by Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan who had served the Indian Church for more than 37 years (27 February 1908 - 30 April 1945) are preserved in Thrissur and not so far used by anybody other than the present writer. Similarly the letters written by Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan from June 1952 till September 1968 were used to find out the causes of the split of the Church in the Assyrian community. Although it is now kept alive only in the Church outside India, the origins of this split are found in these letters. The diaries written in Syriac by both these Metropolitans are used. They are preserved in Thrissur where they lived and worked.

1.6 Name Of The Church

The Church of the East is known in history by various names. The name the Assyrian Church is known in many circles. As the majority of the Church of the East members are Assyrian ethnically this name is preferred. At the same time this Church is known by the name the Nestorian Church in many books authored by Catholic as well as Protestants writers. It is a nickname because when most of the Churches condemned Nestorius the Church of the East refused to condemn Nestorius as it was felt that Nestorius did not teach any heretical ideas in his refusal to call the Blessed Virgin Mary, 'Mother of God' or 'Theotokos'. Now the Church of the East does not normally use the name the Nestorian Church lest it should create the wrong notion among outsiders that it was Nestorius who founded this ancient Church.

The present writer has used this name in many of his books like *The Nestorian Fathers*, *Nestorian Missions*, *Nestorian Theology*. As a matter of fact he is of the opinion that the Church should not feel guilty of using that name; for the name Nestorian is not without honour in history. The great expansion to China, Japan, Tibet, Sri Lanka etc. in the history of the Church is recorded in that name.

The Church of the East in Thrissur is locally known as the Chaldean Syrian

Church. But outside India the name Chaldean refers to the branch of the Church of the East that accepted the supremacy of the Pope of Rome. In the 19th century two Metropolitans namely Mar Thoma Rocos and Mar Elia Yohannan Mellus served this Church. They were consecrated and sent to Thrissur by Patriarch Mar Joseph Audo who was under the Roman jurisdiction. He sent these Metropolitans against the wishes of Rome. Therefore they worked in Thrissur without the permission of the Pope. The representatives of Vatican worked against both these Metropolitans and saw that they were ordered back to Babel. The name Babel is used because the Patriarchs were known as the Patriarchs of Babel or Babylon.

Different names of this Church are used in this dissertation because various authors and documents quoted here had used these different names. The official name, however, is the Church of the East. The title of the dissertation used the name the Assyrian Church of the East as almost all the members of this Church except those in India as well as a few in the two non-Assyrian congregation in the USA are Assyrians.

THE HISTORY OF THE ASSYRIAN
CHURCH OF THE EAST SINCE THE
TIME OF KING ABGAR UCHAMA IN
THE 1st CENTURY TILL THE END OF
THE 19th CENTURY

CHAPTER II

2.1 Introduction

The period from the first century to the end of the 19th century is treated below in an attempt to understand this Church before we plunge into the detailed history of the Church of the East in the 20th century. We are not looking into the details of the earlier centuries, but making only a cursory glance at the vicissitudes of history that this ancient Church went through. As it has shrunk into a small Church many Christians have the wrong notion that it was a small denomination. Many ask me the question, “When did your Church come into being? Was it with Nestorius or later?” Many Christians, unfortunately, in spite of the ecumenical contacts of today, have no idea of this Church or its admirable historic past.

2.2 The Early Period

Some Assyrians proud of their ethnic heritage know of King Nebuchadnezzar, but do not realise that King Nebuchadnezzar was not a Christian. Hence, a re-telling of the story of King Abgar Uchama becomes a necessity. According to the tradition of King Abgar Uchama, tetrarch of Edessa, which some historians dismiss as mere tradition, Christianity came to Edessa by the decision of Jesus Christ himself. When Abgar Uchama wrote a letter to Jesus Christ inviting him to his little kingdom to cure the illness of his son and live comfortably in his kingdom, Jesus himself replied by a letter stating that his time was up and so he would not be able to come to Edessa. However, his disciples would come and heal the sickness of his son.

After the death of Jesus, his disciple Mar Addai went to Edessa and cured the sickness of the son of King Abgar Uchama and evangelized the kingdom of Edessa. Some scholars think that it is an unhistorical legend and do not give it

any historical weight. However, the members of the Church of the East believe in this tradition, whether one wants to call it history or tradition.

Eusebius of Caesaria in his *Ecclesiastical History* states that he has examined the archives in Alexandria and found out that the letter written by Jesus was genuine.¹ This discovery was made in the fourth century. Now the letter is not available and we cannot debate on the genuineness of the letter of King Abgar and the reply, which Jesus sent. Therefore let us rely on what Eusebius of Caesarea, the famous Church historian of the fourth century had recorded. Thus, Edessa becomes the first nation as a whole to become Christian.

The Church of the East believes that it was founded by Mar Addai and Mar Mari. Some believe that Mar Addai is St. Thaddeus, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. Mar Mari is said to be one of the seventy whom Jesus sent. Perhaps Mar Mari was a disciple of Mar Addai. As a modern western scholar Dr.W.A.Wigram is emphatic that Mar Addai and Mar Mari organized the Church in Edessa in the first century itself. On the other hand there were some doubting Thomases that did not pay much attention to the existence of Christianity in Edessa in the first century.²

¹ Eusebius of Caesarea, *The Ecclesiastical History*, I, 13:5. J.B. Segal thinks that The Syriae Acts of Thaddeus was perhaps the source of Abgar found in Eusebius. It was completed in 324 or 325 AD. The Acts of Thaddeus was composed probably at the end of the third century. J.B. Segal, *Edessa, The blessed City*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970, p.62, Foot note 3.

² Persian Church is not the daughter Church of Antioch. It is a daughter Church of Edessa. Later Edessa came under the Patriarch of Antioch. But the Church in Persia has asserted its independence. In the Council of 315 AD in Seleucia in the Persian Church Papa Bar Gaggai did not agree with the Council of Miles, Bishop of Susa and Aqib Alaha, Bishop of Kirkuk. Simon Bar Sabbae, Archdeacon of Papa Bar Gaggai, was consecrated as rival to Papa. As a result Simon Bar Sabbae remained as archdeacon until the death of Papa around 326 or 327. Then Simon Bar Sabbae became Catholicos in 339 AD. Mar Simon Bar Sabbae was martyred along with hundreds of clergy during the terrible persecutions of the Persian King Sapor II (339-379).

In the Synod of Catholicos Mar Issae in 410 AD the independence of the Persian Church was evident. In the Synod of Patriarch Mar Dadeesho in 424 AD at Markabta decision was made not to appeal to westerners. That means Edessa, not Antioch. Cf. David Royel, *The Persian Schism, Voice From The East*, Vol.17, No.2, May-July 1998, Chicago, pp.1-4.

The episcopate of Papa bar Gaggai around 300 AD is considered the starting point of the Church of the East by some scholars. W.A. Wigram clarifies that, "the episcopate of Papa is a definite and important turning-point in the history of the Church, though not the starting-point which they incline to make it."³

Seleucia Ctesiphon, near Baghdad, became the headquarters of this Church very soon. Edessa was a buffer city-state between the Roman Empire and the Persian Empire.

During the imperial wars, the people of Edessa suffered heavily in the fourth century. At the time of Mar Aprem (306-373) as a result of the war many Edessans became refugees and Mar Aprem the deacon had to take care of the orphans and the hungry people.

The official Website of the Assyrian Church of the East has the following information regarding the origin of the Church.⁴

Where did it begin?

The Church of the East developed first in what was known as the Parthian Empire, and when that empire was overthrown by the Persians in the third century it continued its development under the Persian government. This was the region lying to the east of the Roman border, stretching as far as to India. The exact location of the Church's first congregations cannot be established from the historical record, but it is thought that it began its most serious development in the region of Kh'dayab (Adiabene) in northern Mesopotamia, spreading from there in all directions throughout the empire.

³ W.A. Wigram, *An Introduction To The History Of The Assyrian Church Or The Church Of The Sassanid Persian Empire 100-640 AD*, London, SPCK, 1910, p.26.

⁴ *World Wide Web on the Assyrian Church of the East*. WWW.cired.org

The Assyrian people of upper Mesopotamia have always been an important part of the Church of the East, though historically they were only one ethnic group among many others within the Church. However, today they represent the single surviving cultural grouping. Though the Church moved far beyond its beginnings in upper Mesopotamia, the language of that region (Syriac) remained the language of the Church, and its vocabulary, with a certain amount of Greek added in, was the source of its characteristic theological formulations.

How is it organized?

The Church of the East is governed according to the Apostolic model of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. At the turn of the fourth century (c. AD 310) Papa bar Gaggai, the bishop of the capital city of the Persian Empire, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, organized the bishops of the Church in a form which resembled the model developed in the West. He centralized the administration of the Church under his own jurisdiction and assumed the title "Catholicos of the East". From that time on, the bishop of the imperial capital held this office. The Catholicos became the presiding bishop over the entire Church, and his dignity and power were subsequently added to in the fifth century when he received the title "Patriarch". This was done at a general synod called by the Catholicos, Isaac, at Seleucia-Ctesiphon in AD 410. At this synod Marutha, a representative from the Roman Emperor, brought to the assembled bishops the canons and creed of the Council of Nicea, and they were officially approved and received by the Church of the East.

The Church grew in Seleucia Ctesiphon, now in ruins near Baghdad. The Christians of the Persian Empire did not have to face the persecutions, which the Christians in the Roman Empire suffered. Still there were three major persecutions against them under the following rulers:

1. Sapor II (339-379)

2. Yezdgerd I (380-420)
3. Bahram V (420-424)

In the history of this Church the Council of Patriarch Mar Dadeesho in 424 AD is an important event. The Synod decided that no appeals would be made to the West. It is a declaration of the autonomy of this Church. For political reasons the Christians in the Persian Empire did not show any affinity to the people of the Roman Empire. Since the Persian Emperors were Zoroastrians, the Christians of Persia wanted to declare that they were different from the Christians of the Roman Empire.

Such an opportunity came with the unfortunate christological controversy between Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Antioch. The Church of the East did not participate in any of the rival Councils held under Cyril of Alexandria; later supported by the legates of Rome or in the rival Council presided over by Bishop John of Antioch supported by Nestorius of Constantinople. The Church in Persia was not involved in this controversy. However, when they later heard about it they supported Nestorius although John of Antioch agreed to accept the expression Theotokos in 433 AD, two years after the rival Councils of Ephesus issued anathemas and counter anathemas.

The birth of Prophet Mohammed in the year 570 AD had serious repercussions for the Church of the East. Since Khadeeja the rich lady and the first wife of the Prophet Mohammed was a member of this Church it had constant contact with Islam from its inception. Khadeeja consulted her cousin Warqa, when Mohammed had vision of Allah in his sleep. Warqa said that the Ruh Qudsha (Holy Spirit) inspired it. The prophet tolerated Christians.

Patriarch Mar Timotheus I of the 8th century, had close contact with Khalif al Mahdi. The dialogue between the Patriarch and the Khalif al Mahdi is available in Syriac and Arabic. Alfonso Mingana has brought out an English translation of this dialogue.⁵

⁵ A Malayalam translation was published by Mar Narsai Press, Trichur, 1957.

In 635 AD Alopen took Christianity to China. In 736 Mili took the gospel into Japan. It spread into many Arabian regions, Tibet and far Eastern Countries like Indonesia and Ceylon (now known as Sree Lanka). In the 11th century it outnumbered the members of all the western Churches put together. Because of the decline of the Church in recent years it is not in a position to unearth historical details of her glorious past. Nevertheless, western scholars, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, are doing research and writing doctoral dissertations digging deeper into the glorious past of this Church

Alopen brought Christianity to China in 635 AD. Prof. P.Y. Saeki of Tokyo published the *Nestorian Monument in China* and attracted the attention of the scholarly world to the missionary labours of Alopen in China. Later he published another excellent study entitled *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China* and proved beyond doubt that the Nestorian Church was the greatest missionary Church in the early Middle Ages.⁶

2.3 The Middle Ages

In the 13th century when the Abbasid Empire fell, Christians thought that they would have better prospects under the Mongols. Guyuk (d.1248), the grandson of Chingiz Khan, had a Christian vizier and he himself is described by ibn al-'Ibri as a true Christian. In his days the bishops and priests had access to the places of power in the land. In 1258 Hulagu conquered Baghdad. His wife was a true Christian queen.

Rabban Sauma (d. 1317) and monk Marcos (d. 1318) went on an embassy to Rome and France as the ambassadors of Kublai Khan at the end of the 13th century. A Syriac book was translated into English and published by James Montgomery in New York in 1927 under the title *The History of Jabbalaha III Nestorian Patriarch and of his vicar Bar Sauma (d.1317)*. Some of the remarks are interesting and useful for the ecumenical negotiations going on today.

⁶ P.Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China*, Tokyo: The Maruzen Company Ltd., second edition 1951.

Rabban Sauma wanted to celebrate liturgy in Rome. After he celebrated the liturgy, which was attended by a large congregation curious to see how these Mongols celebrated Eucharist, they rejoiced and said: "The language is different, but the rite is one." Rabban Sauma after the celebration went to the Pope and greeted him. The Pope said to Rabban Sauma, "May God receive thy offering and bless thee and pardon thy faults and sins!" And Rabban Sauma said: "With the pardon of my faults and sins which I have received from thee, O Father, I desire of thy fatherliness, O Holy Father, that I may receive the communion from thy hands, so that I may have complete forgiveness." and he said: "It shall be so." This was an important ecumenical event. Anyhow, the monk blessed by the Pope became Patriarch of the Church of the East by the name Jaballaha III in 1289 AD.

This Patriarch died in 1318 AD and was succeeded by Mar Timotheus II. During his time, there was a Synod of the universal Church of the East. Afterwards there is no recorded history of any Synod of the Church until the second half of the 20th century.

Very little is recorded about the history of the period after Patriarch Mar Timotheus II. A Chaldean writer in his paper presented in Cambridge in 1992 states that the well known attempts for reunion such as "that of Patriarch Mar Sabrisho V in 1247 and that of Patriarch Mar Yaballaha III in 1288 were unsuccessful in the long term and were later abandoned".⁷

Around 1400 AD terrific persecutions fell on this Church. Timur Lang (Tamerlane) was a fanatic. His ambition was to conquer the whole world. After Timur Lang the Assyrian Church never had peaceful days. Christianity disappeared from the Arabian peninsula.

The glorious days are over. The Assyrians had to settle down in the mountains of Hakkari in Turkey. Some Assyrians settled down in the Azerbaijan area. The Ottomon Empire established itself in the plain of Mosul in 1516-17, and by a treaty of 1555 with the Safavid state of Persia, acquired

⁷ Subhi Zora, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 247, Rene Lavenant, ed, Ponti. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, Rome, 1994, p.348.

Kurdistan. The same treaty annexed Azerbaijan by Persia. A large number of Assyrian Christians settled around Urmia. In 1562 there were at least four Metropolitan sees in Urmia area.⁸

In the Council of Florence (1438-1445) during the pontificate of Pope Eugene IV, all the Nestorians of Cyprus joined the Catholic Church. Bishop Mar Timotheus of the diocese of Cyprus of the Church of the East signed a document of unity with Rome in August 1445 AD. These Christians were Mesopotamian immigrants. In his profession of faith the Metropolitan describes himself as “Archbishop of Tarsus for the Chaldeans, and bishop of those of them who are in Cyprus”.(Quoted from the paper presented by Fr.Sarhad Jammo in the Joint Committee for Theological Dialogue held at Arezzo, Italy on 13 October 2000). They later adopted the Latin Rite.

2.4 The Split Under John Sulaqa 1553

The year 1552 witnessed what was a very sad event in the history of the Assyrian Church of the East. When Patriarch Shimun bar Mama died in 1551 his nephew Shimun VII Denha was consecrated the Patriarch of the Church of the East as per the custom of the hereditary succession practised in the patriarchal family for over a century. However, some people under the leadership of the Bishops of Erbil, Salamas and Azerbaijan met in Mosul and chose Rabban Sulaqa, a monk at Rabban Hormizd monastery in Mosul. He was consecrated in Rome under the name Patriarch Mar John Sulaqa.⁹ The Franciscan missionaries who were already among the Assyrians helped Rabban Sulaqa. He presented to Pope Julius III a profession of faith.

On April 20,1553, Rabban Sulaqa was solemnly invested as Patriarch in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Lateran. He was given the pallium, with the right, in case of theft or loss, to have one made for him. His successors

⁸ J.F. Coakley, *The Church Of The East And The Church Of England*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, p.14.

⁹ Subhi, Zora. op. cit., p. 349. Dr. Zora states that the name of Sulaqa was Rabban Shimun till his consecration as Patriarch. It cannot be verified in other sources. His remark is perhaps incorrect.

were exempted from going over to Rome for consecration. Since he was the first one to be consecrated a Patriarch in Rome, from the Church of the East, he was given the title the Patriarch of the Chaldeans. The majority of the Church of the East continued to support Patriarch Mar Shimun Denha of the hereditary line.

Upon return to Mesopotamia in 1553 itself, Patriarch John Sulaqa established his headquarters at Amida (Diarbekir). He consecrated two metropolitans for Amida and Mardin, and three bishops for Gezira, Seert and Hassan -Kef. Unfortunately, he was imprisoned and brutally murdered in 1555, exactly fifteen months after his return to his country. He was immediately succeeded by one of the bishops he had consecrated namely Mar Abdisho IV (1555-1567). Seven years after his consecration he went to Rome to renew his profession of faith. That was the time the Council of Trent was in session, i. e., 1545-1563. The Patriarch participated in the last session of the Council of Trent. The Chaldean profession of faith was read in the twenty-second session of The Council of Trent. Some scholars think that the Patriarch did not personally attend the session.

Patriarch Mar Abdisho IV decided to move his headquarters from Amida to Seert, to avoid conflict with the Assyrians who were blamed for the murder of Sulaqa.¹⁰ There, Mar Abdisho consecrated not less than fourteen Archbishops and Bishops. Before the Patriarch died at Seert in 1567 he had sent some bishops to Malabar including the brother of the murdered Patriarch Mar John Sulaqa namely Mar Joseph who reached India in 1555 AD¹¹ along with another bishop Mar Abraham. Two Maltese Dominicans namely Bishop Ambrose Buttigeg and Fr. Antoninus Zahara who were sent by Pope Julius III to help Patriarch Sulaqa had accompanied these Chaldean Metropolitans to India. But the Portuguese authorities did not co-operate with the plan of the Catholic Chaldean Patriarch to control the Indian Church.

¹⁰ Actually the Turks in Diabekir were responsible for killing Sulaqa.

¹¹ Mar Joseph was consecrated Metropolitan by his own brother Patriarch John Sulaqa in 1554 AD.

The Chaldean bishops were detained in Goa and sent to Mozambique and later to the Franciscan Friary in Salsette near Bombay in 1556. Fr. Antonio do Porto, the guardian of that Friary, found their faith satisfactory. But he didn't want them to go to Malabar because in his view "the bishop of Goa was the bishop of Malabar and of the whole of India," and "those who go to administer the sacraments to the Christians of Malabar without the permission of the bishop of Goa, would be thieves who do not enter the sheep-fold through the gate."¹² Finally, Mar Joseph who was forced to leave India in 1568 died in Rome in 1569, where his brother Sulaqa was consecrated Patriarch 16 years earlier. His tomb has not been located so far.

Eugene Cardinal Tisserant in his book *Eastern Christianity in India* comments on the pathetic end of Mar Joseph Sulaqa. Cardinal comments,¹³

Yet the measure of suffering was full, and Mar Joseph received, near the tomb of the Apostles, the crown which he had merited, through his long and slow martyrdom which was perhaps a more painful one than that of his heroic brother.

Patriarch Mar Abdisho was a great scholar. He wrote several books about liturgy, daily offices, and prayers. He wrote poetry and prose. He wrote the history of the martyrdom of his predecessor Mar Yohannan Sulaqa as well as the history of the Popes.

The history of The Chaldean branch is left here because this dissertation is about the Assyrian Church. It should be noted here that there were many conflicts between the Chaldeans and the Assyrians. Both Patriarchs tried to send Bishops to India. The Chaldean Patriarch was prohibited from sending Bishops to India, because Rome thought that they should directly deal with the Church in Malabar. The last Chaldean bishop of this period Mar Abraham died in January 1597, which made it easy for the Arch-

¹² Joseph, Thekkedath., *History of Christianity in India, Vol.II*, Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1981, p.41.

¹³ Cardinal Eugene Tesserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, Translated by E.R. Hambye, Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1957, p.41.

bishop of Goa to conduct a synod in June 1599 at Udayamperur near Cochin.

It has been a continuous controversy in the history of the Church in India as to how much Chaldean the Indian Church should be, especially because the Indian Church known as Syro-Malabar is much bigger (at least five times more) than the Chaldean Church spread all over the world. The Syro-Malabar Church has accepted the liturgy of Addai and Mari, but they are not permitted to have a Patriarch, but only a Major Archbishop.

The Assyrian Church of the East continued under the hereditary Patriarchs of Mar Shimun family. The Patriarchate of Mar Yousif, the third line of Patriarchs, is to be treated as an important period in the 18th century. In 1672 Mar Yousif professed Catholic faith, challenging the Assyrian Patriarch Mar Shimun VIII. The Assyrian Patriarch opposed Mar Yousif. But Mar Yousif obtained approval from the Turkish authorities as the Patriarch of the Chaldeans having authority over the Chaldeans at Diarbekir, Mardin and other places. On May 20, 1681 Pope Innocent XI confirmed Mar Yousif as Patriarch of the Chaldeans with residence at Diarbekir. Thus the Catholic Chaldeans were properly taken care until Yohanna Hormizd abjured Nestorianism and united with Rome under the leadership of Yohanna Hormizd in July 1830. Dr. Subhi Zora, a Chaldean doctor living in England, observed.¹⁴

Patriarch Yohanna Hormizd transferred the patriarchate from Babylon to Mosul. His administration was rather calm, peaceful and successful in most levels. He died at Baghdad in 1838 AD.

His death marked the end of the hereditary system of patriarchal appointment, which used to pass from uncle to nephew. In order to avoid any chance of the assertion of the hereditary principle in the succession of the patriarchs, the Holy See had named a coadjutor to the Patriarch Hormizd with right of succession.

¹⁴ Subhi Zora., *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 247, Rene Lavenant (ed), Ponti. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, Rome, 1994, p.354.

This was Nicholas I Zaia who took over as Patriarch in 1839. During his patriarchate, the Kurds massacred a large number of Chaldeans and Assyrians, especially in the year 1843 and 1845. In 1846 the Chaldeans were recognised by the Turkish authorities as separate millet, and as a Chaldean Nationality.

The new Patriarch Mar Nicholas Zaia I worked as a Patriarch for nine years only. In 1847, he had to resign and live in Persia where he died in 1855. Meanwhile Joseph Audo was made Patriarch in 1847 and ruled for 30 years. About Patriarch Joseph VI Audo Dr.Zora remarks, "Patriarch Yousip VI Audo was a very energetic and dynamic Patriarch. His period was marked as the most exciting and controversial in the history of the Chaldean Church."¹⁵

The same writer remarks that "many of the Nestorian parishes joined the Catholic faith"¹⁶ during the administration of Patriarch Audo. In 1853 he codified the Chaldean Canon Law in the Latin form at the Council of Rabban Hormizd. This was done under the influence of the apostolic delegate Planchet who was a Jesuit. This patriarch was always opposed to the Congregation of the Propagation of Faith. By 1860 AD, it was open defiance. In 1861 against the advice of Rome, Patriarch sent Mar Thoma Rocos Metropolitan to India. This Chaldean bishop was well received in Trichur. But in 1862 he was forced to return to Mesopotamia. Rome used its influence in India to push Rocos out of Kerala. However, Fr.Anthony Thondanat returned with him by the same steamship and requested Patriarch Joseph Audo to consecrate him a Metropolitan. The Latin advisers did not allow Patriarch to do it. So he went to the Assyrian Patriarch in Kochanes Mar Ruvel Shimun and was consecrated Metropolitan in 1862.

Patriarch Audo¹⁷ sent Metropolitan Yohannan Elia Mellus to India in 1874 and he lived in Trichur upto 1882. On 25 January, 1870 Patriarch Audo made a strong speech in the First Vatican Council (1869-70) making his

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 354.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Audo's Patriarchate was from 1847 - 1878.

claims known about the rights and privileges of the Eastern Churches. In 1876, he was threatened with excommunication. On March 1, 1877, the Patriarch wrote to Pope Pius IX expressing his full submission to the Pope. Pope replied him in a friendly letter.

The history of Yohanna Hormizd is another sad situation in the annals of the Church of the East in the beginning of the 19th century. Patriarch Mar Elia Shimun XIII was wavering to move to the Catholic fold. But he remained firm in the old faith. But his younger cousin who was to succeed him as The Patriarch of the Assyrian Church, Yohanna Hormizd, became a Catholic while he was a young bishop. The Chaldeans made him the Metropolitan of Mosul. In 1804 Patriarch Elias Mar Shimun XIII died. His successor should have been his cousin Yohanna Hormizd. But he was already the Chaldean Metropolitan of Mosul, perhaps with an eye on the office of the Chaldean Patriarch. Yohanna Hormizd could not become the Chaldean Patriarch, because Mar Yousif V was the Chaldean Patriarch at that time. When the Chaldean Patriarch Mar Yousif V died in 1828, Mar Yohanna Hormizd, former Assyrian bishop, was appointed Patriarch of the Chaldeans on 5th July 1830.

Because of the fact that Yohanan Hormizd, the Chaldean Patriarch appointed in 1830 was the cousin of the Assyrian Patriarch Mar Elias Shimun XIII who died in 1804, the Catholic scholars today argue that the original line of Patriarchate is now the Catholic Chaldean line. And the Patriarchs of the Assyrian Church today are the successors of Sulaqa. It is very difficult for the members of the Church of the East to accept this argument. Ever since the present writer read about this view in the book of Cardinal Tisserant more than four decades ago, he is not fully convinced by this argument continuously presented by the Catholic scholars.

In the Symposium Syriacum held in the Cambridge University in 1992 a Chaldean scholar, Dr. Subhi Zora argued the general Chaldean view in his paper entitled "Some Outstanding Events in the History of the Chaldean Christians of the East (1551-1992)." Dr. Zora, who is a layman, has presented in his paper the Chaldean view very effectively. But most Assyrians

do not accept this view. At the conclusion of his paper, he presented a chart with the names of all Nestorian and Chaldean bishops. According to that list, the following persons who preceded Patriarch Mar Elias Shimun Ishoyabh who died in 1804 AD are put under the caption “Returning Nestorians”:¹⁸

Shimun XIII Denha (1662-1700)

Shimun XIV Suleiman (1700-1740)

Shimun XV Michael (1740-1780)

Shimun XVI Yohanna (1780-1820)

(This Line continues to the present day)

He omits the names of the successors in the Nestorian line. From 1820, onwards we have patriarchs of this line more known, because Patriarch Mar Avraham Shimun (1820-60) is known from the books of Rev. George Badger (*Nestorians and their Rituals*, 2 volumes). The pictures or drawings of all the Patriarchs after 1820 are available in some books. The present writer has seen the photos of all patriarchs, actually six including the present Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV who does not belong to the tribe or the family of the previous five patriarchs. Mar Abraham Shimun’s successor Mar Ruwel was his nephew.¹⁹ His successor Mar Benyamin was his nephew.²⁰ His successor Mar Poulouse was his younger brother.²¹ His successor Mar Eshai Shimun was his nephew.²² With his resignation in 1973 and his assassination on 6 November, 1975, that family line ends. But to say that Mar Abraham is from the line of Sulaqa who went over to Rome in 1552 is not fully convincing to most of the members of the Church of the East. One fact is that from the time of Sulaqa in 1553 Rome had tempted Patriarchs and Prelates of the original Church of the East to unite with Rome. Some did, but some did not.

¹⁸ Subhi, Zora, op. Cit., p. 359.

¹⁹ Mar Ruvel Shimun died in 1903.

²⁰ Mar Banyamin Shimun was murdered in 1918.

²¹ Mar Poulouse Shimun died in 1920.

²² Mar Eshai Shimun was murdered in 1975.

The list of the Patriarchs of the Church of the East is also matter of confusion to some scholars. In an excellent study “The Patriarchal List of the Church of the East” published in 1999 Dr.J.F.Coakley tries to give some comments regarding the continuity of the patriarchal succession. He rightly remarks that the Assyrians are proud of their tradition. He mentions that “Occasionally, enthusiasm for the antiquity of the patriarchate gets out of control”. He writes:²³

To the present-day member of the Assyrian Church of the East, the Church’s list of Patriarchs, extending back to apostolic times and having dates neatly and more or less continuously assigned to each holder of the office, is a matter of pride and importance.

Within the Church of the East, the list of Patriarchs has been published in two different recensions in this century. The earlier one (L1) was the work of Qasha Yosip d-Bet Kelaita, and appeared in 1924 as an appendix to his edition of the Book of the Pearl of Abdisho of Nisibis. The Pearl (in Syriac *Marganita*), a handbook of the doctrine of the Church of the East, no doubt suggested itself as a suitable text to which a list of Patriarchs could be attached....

The second recension of the patriarchal list (L2) was the work of Qasha Iskhaq Rehana d- Bet Gadda. It was published in 1965, again as an appendix to the *Marganita*, although this time in English translation.

Dr.J.F. Coakley thinks that the 1965 list of Qasha Iskhaq Rehana “succeeded in producing a yet more rigid list L2” by “removing even the occasional ambiguities in L1” prepared in 1924 by Revd. Yosip d Bet Kellaita.

²³ J.F. Coakley, *The Patriarchal List Of The Church Of The East, After Bardaisan*, *Orientalia Lovaniensa Analecta*, 89, Lueven, 1999, pp.65-66.

2.5 The Synod Of Diamper, 1599 AD

The history of the origins of the Church in India is not discussed in detail here. Some scholars question the historicity of the apostolic origin of the Church in India stating that there are no historical documents to prove the mission of St. Thomas in India. Those doubting Thomases admit that the Church in India came around 500 AD, as they cannot deny the historical evidence of the reference in the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes in which Cosmas states that, he witnessed a Christian community in South west coast of India with bishops coming from Persia.

Nevertheless many Indian scholars believe that the tradition of St. Thomas establishing seven churches in South India in 52 AD is correct. Fr. Mathias A. Mundadan CMI, one of the most respected Church historians today, asserts,²⁴

From the discussion of sources above it is obvious in order to assess the origins of Christianity in India there is no alternative but to take tradition into account. This is generally true also with regard to their history till the end of fifteenth century. A few records do exist both in the West and in the East, which refer to the existence of Christians in India in the ancient and medieval times. But they are few and far between.

The synod presided over by Archbishop Alexio de Meneses of Goa at a place called Udaiyamperur or Diamper in the south west coast of India in June 1599 has become a matter of debate ever since its happening. About two centuries later Paremakal Thoma Governedor, the leader of the Syrian Christians in Kerala, also says that the Churches in the northern parts did not acknowledge this synod.²⁵

²⁴ Mathias Mundadan CMI, in Bosco Puthur, ed., *The Life And Nature Of The St. Thomas Christian Church In The Pre-Diamper Period*, LRC, No.1, Kochi, 2000, p.37.

²⁵ The *Kashkul*, the Syriac Prayer Book copied at Kothamangalam, Kerala in 1585 AD (Fourteen years prior to the Synod of Diamper) does not contain the expression *Imme dalaha* (mother of God). It uses *Imme demshiha* (Mother of Christ). This valuable manuscript is preserved in the Metropolitan's Palace, Thrissur.

Mar Abraham, the last bishop of the 16th century, died in 1597. He had been under the pressure of Rome to correct the prayers etc, which were in use in Kerala. Mar Abraham was asked to make the necessary correction to the Syriac prayer books. As there were no other bishops in Kerala at that time Alexio de Menezes made the decrees of Diamper with the secret purpose of destroying the existing Persian tradition, which was prevalent in India at that time. Since Alexio de Menezes did not know the Syriac language he asked Francis Roz, a Catalan Jesuit, who had studied Syriac language to write “*De erroribus Nestorianorum* (The Nestorian errors)”. Some Catholic scholars argue that it was “only a pretext to submit them to the Royal Patronage of Portugal.”²⁶

Archbishop Menezes had written to the Roman Catholic titular Archbishop of Jerusalem that he wanted to purge the Church in India of heresy and errors. The major ones were:

The Infancy of our Saviour or “History of our Lady”.

The Book of John Barialdon.

Procession of the Holy Spirit.

Marganita Fidei or the Jewel of Faith.

The Book of the Fathers. (*Vavakkade pusthakam*).

The Life of Abba Isaiah.

The Book of Synods (Synodicon Orientale).

The Book of Timothy the Patriarch.

The Letter of the Lord’s Day.

The Book called Maclamatass (*Makamat* of Mar Abdisho (d.1318) Paradise of Eden.)

The Book of Uguarda or the Rose (Hymns of George Warda of Arbel (1230AD).

The Book of Camiz (Kamisa). Songs of Kamis bar Qardahe (13th century)

The Letter of Maranacai. Mar Narsai (d.502).

The Book entitled “*Memra*”.

The Book of Orders (Ordination Thaksa).

Book of Homilies.

²⁶ Geevarghese Chediath, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, No.236, Rome, Ponti. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1988, p.412.

An Exposition of the Gospels.

The Book of Rabban Hormisd.

The Book of the Lots.

The Book Analogous to the "*Flos Sanctorum*".

The Book called Parisman (Sorceries).

Hudra.

Gaza.

The hidden agenda of converting the native Christians into another brand of Christians was a new phenomenon. This was a time when Martin Luther had not nailed the 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenburg, Germany where his tomb is situated. But after 1517AD,²⁷ the Reformation under Martin Luther took away many thousands of Christians from under the authority of the Pope. The revolt led by King Henry VIII also separated the Christians in England from obedience to the Pope.

Then the Roman Catholic Church tried to get Christians outside their sphere into its fold and turned to the East. We have already seen that in 1553 AD Pope Julius III had consecrated John Sulaqa, a monk from Mesopotamia, the Patriarch of Babylon. This consecration took place in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Lateran in Rome. In India, the Portuguese tried to stop the Bishops coming from the Church of the East.

After the split of John Sulaqa, the bishops from his side began to come to India. Although John Sulaqa himself wanted to send bishops to India, he was murdered in the beginning of 1555 AD. But his successor Patriarch Abdisho sent Mar Joseph, brother of the murdered Sulaqa, to India to be installed as Metropolitan in Malabar. But unfortunately he had to face opposition from the authorities in Goa.

They were technically Roman Catholics as the Pope consecrated their Patriarch. The Portuguese nevertheless were not satisfied by such explana-

²⁷ 2 May, 1999 the present writer celebrated Holy Qurbana in the Assyrian language in the altar of this Castle Church at Wittenburg, in front of the tombs of the Reformers, Martin Luther and Philip Melanchton.

tions. The Portuguese wanted to send western bishops to these eastern Christians.

Before the end of the 16th century, another difference also took place. In 1582, Pope Gregory introduced a new calendar now known as the Gregorian calendar. The Syrian Christians were following the Eastern calendar known as the Julian calendar.²⁸ At present, there is a difference of 13 days between these two calendars. But in the 16th century it was a difference of ten days. On 4th October the Pope commanded that the next day would be counted October 15 and not October 5, as most of the Eastern Churches are still doing. But a difference of one day in each century except the one every four centuries makes it a difference of 13 days.

The Christians in India did not adopt this calendar. In 1599 when Archbishop Alexio de Menezes conducted the Synod of Diamper or Udayamperur on 20th June, he called it the third Sunday after Pentecost. These differences were there. But the Portuguese wanted the Indian Christians to completely identify themselves with the customs and administration of the Portuguese style. The decrees of the Synod of Diamper proved this. This resulted in the conflicts and confusion, which we see later in 1653 AD culminated in the revolt in the form of the oath at the Coonen Cross in Mattanchery, Cochin.

A day before the Synod of Diamper was to be convened the spies of Archbishop Menezes reported that the Syrian Christians were concerned about the changes, which this Synod was trying to bring about. The people said with much feeling: ²⁹

Tomorrow we shall have done for ever with our Patriarch of Babylon who governed us all these years. We shall no more name at divine office or Mass Mar Simon - such was the name of The Patriarch who then governed them. This *Matriane* of Europe was - so was the

²⁸ Named after Julius Ceasar, who lived before Jesus.

²⁹ Scaria Zechariah.,ed, *The Acts And Decrees Of The Synod Of Diamper, 1599*, Edamatom, 1994, p.21.

archbishop called - has grown powerful that he has taken away all the customs in which we have been brought up.

The Synod of Diamper that met for seven days (June 20- 26) had nine actions (equivalent to sessions). The first two sessions were held on the first two days i.e., June 20 and 21. On the third day, the decrees on the faith were to be taken up. But the local priests requested that to be postponed to the fifth day when the Portuguese were to go to Parur to celebrate the feast of St. John the Baptist according to their Latin rite. The memorial of St. John the Baptist according to the Syrian calendar is on the Friday after the feast of Epiphany. It comes only in January every year as Epiphany is on 6th January (19th January according to the eastern calendar).

On the third day, therefore, the decrees on the different sacraments were read. On the 4th day the Eucharist and the sacraments of penance and extreme unction were discussed.

On the 5th day i.e., 24th June the question of faith was discussed. This session was held behind closed doors. The first decree of this session was on faith and subdivided into 14 chapters. It was followed by twenty-two other decrees. The 2nd and 3rd decrees were meant to make the Syrian Bible to be in line with the Latin Vulgate.

“Some other canons of this session were to warn the Christians against contact with the Hindus,” remarks Fr. Joseph Thekkedath in his book on the *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. II. He further observes: ³⁰

Thus the doctrines of transmigration, fate and indifferentism were condemned. Christian children were forbidden to attend the schools for reading and fencing, conducted by Hindu teachers, if the latter obliged all their pupils to worship their idols. Christian teachers were ordered to remove from their schools any idols, which may have been set up there to enable their Hindu pupils to worship them.

³⁰ Joseph Thekkedath, 1981, op.cit., p.72.

The 20th and 21st decrees stated that the Malabar Church accepted the Council of Ephesus of 431 AD and the Council of Trent of the 16th century. Decree 20 states:³¹

...But especially it doth with great veneration receive and embrace the first Holy Council of Ephesus, consisting of 200 fathers, firmly believing all that was therein determined, and rejecting and condemning whatsoever it condemned; but above all, the diabolical heresy of the Nestorians, which has been for many years preached and believed in this diocese together with its author Nestorius and all his followers, the said council did reject and anathematize; who being taught by the devil, held that there were two persons in our Lord Jesus Christ; affirming also, that the Divine Word did not take flesh into the unity of its person, but only for an habitation, or holy dwelling, as a temple; and that it ought not to be said, that God was incarnate... Furthermore this Synod does acknowledge the glorious Cyril, Archbishop and Patriarch of Alexandria, who by the order of the bishop of Rome, presided in the holy Ephesian council, to be a blessed saint, at this time enjoying God in heaven, and that is doctrine in the said council against the Nestorians is holy and universally received in the Catholic Church, professing all that reject it to be excommunicated heretics.

The decree No.21 states that, "...doth embrace the last holy and sacred council of Trent". The Eastern and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, except the Assyrian Church of the East, accept not only the Council of Nicea (325 AD) and the Council of Constantinople (381 AD), but also the Council of Ephesus of 431 AD. But the Council of Trent in the 16th century is a Western Council and is not accepted by any of the Eastern Churches. This imposition of the Council of Trent is a clear indication of the intention of the Catholic Church to convert the Eastern Churches to the Catholic Church.

The decree No.22 brought the priests and the faithful "to the holy, upright, just and necessary court of the holy office of the inquisition in these parts

³¹ Quoted from Scaria Zechariah., ed, op.cit.,pp.108-109.

established....” The excuse the archbishop finds is that there should be uniformity with other dioceses in this province and also considering that the Christians “live in the midst of infidels.” The archbishop thinks that, “such necessary cases will sometimes happen, and especially to rude and ignorant people.”

On the sixth day, the holy orders and the matrimony were treated. The clergy were forbidden to be married. This brought resentment among the clergy who were married. Many priests came from the traditional priestly families. Some of them used to boast that their fathers and grandfathers were all priests. But now this new rule insisted not only that the future clergy should remain celibates, but also the current clergy who were married had to leave their wives and children. It must be remembered that the majority of the priests present at this synod were the ones ordained by Archbishop Menezes and definitely they were all celibates.³²

The canonical age for the lay people to get married was also fixed. There was a custom in India for children under 12 to get married. Session 7, second section decree No.10 prescribes the age of marriage: ³³

Whereas in this diocese there has hitherto been no respect had in the celebration of matrimony to the age of the parties that the law appoints, therefore the Synod doth command, that no man shall be married hereafter, until he has attained the age of fourteen years at least, nor any woman before she is full twelve...

On the seventh day, the territory of the Archdiocese of Angamalee was divided into parishes. The priests were asked to work for the conversion of the heathens. They were asked to use “just and gentle methods” to convert the heathens to the catholic faith. They were asked to build Churches if there are considerable number of converts.

³² At present when the Catholic Church accepts the married clergy from other Churches, they do not insist that they should desert their wives.

³³ Scaria Zechariah., op.cit., pp.108- 109.

In session 9 which was the final session of this Synod the Portuguese Archbishop tried to reform many social customs of the Christians in Malabar. In decree one he abolished all superstitious customs. Decree No. 3 forbids heathen purifications. There are Christians even today who consult witches and fortune-tellers. The decree No.7 commands: ³⁴

One of the greatest sins in the sight of God, and which he has always prohibited and punished above all others, is the consulting of the witches, and such as hold a correspondence with the devil: wherefore the synod being informed that a great many Christians of this bishopric, and especially among those that live in the heaths, by reason of the communication they have with infidels. and their having so many witches and fortune-tellers about them, when they intend to marry, have recourse to such people to know what success they shall have, governing themselves so much by what they are told, as to break off matches after they are concluded, and to make new ones at the pleasure of the said witches; as also when they are sick that they send for such people to perform some ceremony whereby they hope to have their health restored; and at other times to help them to children, and to discover thefts, and for several other purposes; all which are things repugnant to the Christian religion, Doth command all Christians convicted of having consulted any of the said witches for these or any other purposes, to be thrown out of the Church; neither shall any priest go to their houses or give them the casture, during the prelates pleasure, or for one year at least, and shall be punished with such other penalties as the ceremonies they performed and consented to shall deserve.

The Church in Malabar revolted on 3 January, 1653 AD. They took an oath at Coonen Cross in Cochin, swearing that they and their children would never submit to the Paulists (the foreign Roman Catholic Jesuit priests) who cut away their historic obedience to the Patriarch of the Per-

³⁴ Ibid.,pp.205-206.

sian Church.³⁵ As there was no bishop to consecrate bishops among them, twelve priests laid hands on their Archdeacon Thomas³⁶ on 20 May 1653 and made him their bishop,³⁷ later known in history as Metropolitan Mar Thoma I.

In 1665 AD Mar Gregorius,³⁸ Metropolitan of Jerusalem arrived in Malabar and the Christians received him. The Syrian Christians who revolted at the Coonen Cross in 1653 gladly accepted him as he was not under the Pope of Rome. But later the Christians of Malabar realised that he came from the Church of Antioch. He began to use the liturgy of St. James instead of the liturgy of Mar Addai and Mar Mari used by these Christians from the early centuries. Thus a large number of the Christians of St. Thomas came under the West Syrian tradition and their Church is now known as the Syrian Orthodox Church under the Patriarch of Antioch now living in Damascus. Another group of the same tradition known as the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India is under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos living in Devalokam, Kottayam.

The Independent Syrian Church of Malabar in Thozhiyur, near Kunnampulam is the result of a split that occurred in this Church in 1772 AD under Mar Koorilose Metropolitan of Kattumangat. It functions as a bridge Church as their Metropolitans receive consecration from the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar. The Mar Thoma Syrian Church belongs

³⁵ The Syro Malabar scholars argue that it was not a revolt against the Pope as the non-Catholic scholars claim. It was a revolt only against one religious order of the Roman Catholics, i-e Jesuits.

³⁶ This ordination took place at Alangat or Mangat in Kerala. Cf. Placid J. Podipara, *The Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Prakasham Publications, Alleppy, 1976, p. 123.

³⁷ This Archdeacon was a celibate. He belonged to the famous Pakalomattom family. According to the Church of the East, the Archdeacons can marry. Only the clergy in episcopal ranks had obligation to keep celibacy. There is no evidence to conclude that all Archdeacons were celibates.

³⁸ This Mar Gregorius of Jerusalem (d.1681) is known as Gregorius Abdul Jaleel. He was declared a saint of the Syrian Orthodox Church by Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zaka Iwas of Damascus when he visited Kerala, India on 9 April, 2000. The other Syrian prelate canonised on the occasion was Metropolitan Sleeba Mor Osthathiose who died in Kunnampulam near Thrissur on May 19, 1930. cf. *Indian Christian Directory For The New Millennium*, A Deepika Publication, Kottayam, Kerala, 2000. p.147.

to the same tradition. That Church has a separate existence from the Syrian Orthodox Church since Abraham Malpan led a reformation in 1836 AD. The first Metropolitan of Reformation Mathews Mar Athanasius of the Palakunnath family who went to Mesopotamia was consecrated by the Patriarch of Antioch for the whole Syrian Church in India in 1842 AD. This 24-year-old Metropolitan led the Indian Church towards the principles of reformation. This resulted in a split. The civil suits filed against him were decided against his group during the time of his successor Thomas Mar Athanasius (son of Abraham Malpan) in 1889 AD.

A further split occurred in September 1930 under the leadership of Mar Ivanios Metropolitan who accepted the supremacy of the Pope of Rome.³⁹ This denomination now numbering about 330,000 is known as the Syro-Malankara Church. Its head is the Archbishop of Trivandrum, Cyril Mar Baselius.

The Church of the East was reduced to a small group. The majority of that community ruled by the bishops sent by the Patriarch of the Church of the East came under the Catholic Church as a result of the colonial missionary activities of Portuguese and dedicated service of the Jesuits as well as other monastic congregations. This Church is now known as the Syro Malabar Church numbering more than 3.3 million members under the major Archbishop of Ernakulam and Angamalee, Mar Varkey Vithayathil.

The Church of the East did not receive bishops after the Synod of Diamper of 1599 AD. In the 17th century no bishops from Mesopotamia served the Church in India. The only bishop who came in that century is Mar Iethalaha or Ahatalla who attempted to land in Cochin in 1653 AD, but was pre-

³⁹ Mar Ivanios was a Metropolitan of the Indian Orthodox Syrian Church. Being an educated Metropolitan of this Church belonging to the faction opposed to the Patriarch of Antioch, he started negotiation with the Roman Catholic Church to be accepted in the Catholic Church in case their faction lost the civil suits against the Patriarch's group. On 20 September, 1930 Mar Ivanios along with Bishop Mar Theophilos, Fr. John OIC, Deacon Alexander and Chacko Kilileth were accepted in the Catholic Church by the Latin Catholic Bishop of Quilon Dr. Maria Benziger specially deputed by the Pope. *Indian Christian Directory For The New Millennium*, op. Cit., p.974.

vented by the Portuguese captain of the ship which resulted in the revolt of Coonen Cross mentioned above.⁴⁰

The first bishop to arrive in the 18th century is Mar Simon of Ada who arrived in Malabar in 1701AD. Mar Simon is generally believed to be a bishop of the Church of the East. But Cardinal Tisserant and Placid Podipara conclude in the basis of the unpublished documents in Rome that Mar Simon was a bishop belonging to the Chaldean Catholic Church sent to Malabar to attempt a union between the Catholic and the Orthodox. The Inquisition condemned him as he seems to have admitted that he was only a layman and had forged letter to the Patriarch of Babylon. Anyhow the dead body of this bishop was found in a well in Pondichery. Mar Simon must have been a clever bishop, because as soon as he arrived in Malabar he consecrated Anjelus Francis, a bishop on May 22, 1701.

Mar Gabriel was another bishop who came from the Persian Church. He ruled the Church from 1709 to 1731 and was buried in cheriapally in Kottayam. Mar Gabriel seems to have ruled over 22 churches in Malabar. Again the identity of this bishop is questioned. Adrian Fortescue, a Roman Catholic English historian, admits that Mar Gabriel was a Nestorian.⁴¹

They made various unsuccessful attempts to capture their ancient daughter church. Early in the 18th century, they sent a bishop Mar Gabriel, who formed for a time a schism from the Jacobite Metropolitan; but his part seems to have died out with him.

In 1747, another Assyrian bishop Mar Johannis crossed over by a Dutch ship from Basra in order to perform the consecration ceremony of the native Mar Thoma. He did not perform any consecration in Malabar. The charge was levelled against him that he stole the silver vessels from the Churches. He was arrested by the Raja of Cochin state for having stolen the

⁴⁰ There is a dispute about his identity. The members of the Church of the East claim that Ahatallah was their bishop. On the other hand the Syrian Orthodox scholars insist that he was their bishop, a forerunner of Mar Gregorius of Jerusalem who reached Malabar twelve years later. The Syro Malabar writers surmise that Ahatalla was their bishop.

⁴¹ Adrian Fortescue, *The Lesser Eastern Churches*, London, 1913, p.365.

moneys of three or four Churches. This bishop wrote to Dutch authorities requesting them to grant money to help the Syrian Christians of Malabar. The Dutch Records in Fort St. George in Madras dated 2nd October 1748 have the following entry. "Letters from the Syrian bishop Ioannis asking protection against the Catholics."⁴²

2.6 The 19th Century

In the 19th century, the Assyrian Christians were brought to the attention to the Royal Geographical Society's expeditions in Kurdistan area. In 1835–37 the Euphrates Expeditions under the leadership of Colonel F.R. Chesney explored the possibility of a land route by water. The attempt was a failure. Two steam vessels made a journey in the Euphrates River downstream to Basra. But one of the two vessels and twenty people were lost. The remaining vessel could not make a return journey from Basra to Upper Euphrates upstream.

Mr. William Ainsworth, surgeon and geologist of this expedition, had instructions to return via Kurdistan to explore for coal in that mountain region. Isa Rassam (Isa is Arabic for Jesus) was the chief Arabic interpreter for this expedition.

Christian Rassam born in 1808 in Mosul was a Catholic Chaldean. When he was sixteen years old, he was sent to Rome to become a priest.⁴³ He went via Damascus and Cairo where he stayed with his uncle who was a merchant. The uncle persuaded him to be a merchant because he said, "the Pope was a bad fellow".

During his stay in Cairo Isa Rassam came under the influence of a German missionary of the CMS who persuaded him to return to his Church and reform it. When he was about 24 years old, he made an Arabic translation

⁴² D. Ferroli, *The Jesuits Of Malabar*, Vol.II, The National Press, Bangalore, 1961, p.148.

⁴³ One of the reasons for the progress of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Iraq was its opportunity for their clergy to go and study in Rome.

of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. He revised the Arabic prayer book. Three years later in January 1835 he married an English woman Matilda Badger, sister of George Percy Badger who also came to Mosul in 1842 AD.

In 1836 Ainsworth stayed in Mosul in the house of Christian Rassam and met Christian's brother Hormizd Rassam. In 1837 after his return to England Ainsworth proposed to the Royal Geographical Society for a fresh expedition to Kurdistan. He took Rassam as his interpreter.

During this period, Rassam had met William Palmer of Magdalen College, Oxford. William Palmer being Anglo-Catholic did not own the evangelical zeal of the CMS missionaries. He claimed that the Anglicans accepted prayers for the dead, and was in some theoretical way still in communion with the Pope.⁴⁴ Rassam was happy to unite with the Church of England to which his wife belonged and expressed his hope that the Chaldean Church and Anglicans could unite.

Isa Rassam believed that when he would talk to his bishops about what he had learned about the Anglican Church from William Palmer, "they would meet in Synod and cast off the Pope and write to the Patriarch of this country".⁴⁵ The "Patriarch" he mentions is the Archbishop of Canterbury. Rassam's other proposals are:⁴⁶

That he (sic) should send the Patriarch himself to Oxford; that the Oxford University Press should print the Chaldean service – books; and that the University should educate a few young men to be bishops in the Church, after the fashion of the Roman Propaganda.

Rassam impressed William Howley, the Archbishop of Canterbury. So was C.J. Bloomfield, the bishop of London. As a result, the S.P.C.K. (Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge) Committee in London granted

⁴⁴ Quoted from J.F.Coakley.,1992, op.cit., p.21.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.22.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

in January 1838 the deserved grant of £500 for this expedition.

On February 1838 the Secretary of the S.P.C.K., London wrote to Mr. Rassam,⁴⁷

The Society does not seek to interfere in any way with the affairs of the Chaldean Christians, or of any of the branches of the Church of Christ existing in the countries of the East: but it is very anxious to afford them such assistance as it may be able to do, consistently with its own principles, in order that they themselves may be able to improve their own condition, and become once more flourishing branches of the Heavenly Vine.

On this subject, therefore, you are to endeavour to obtain for the Society all the information that you can respecting the state and condition of the Christians in general in those countries which you are about to visit, but more especially of those of your own Church. You are also to inform the Society what are the opinions and wishes of the Patriarchs, Bishops, and Clergy, as to the means by which spiritual knowledge may be increased, and as to the kind of assistance which they would be willing to receive.

When Ainsworth and Rassam visited Mar Abraham Shimun Patriarch (d.1860) they tried to explain that the Church of England was different from the Roman Catholic. During their conversation Qasha Mendu, the Chaldean priest who was with Ainsworth and Rassam presented Patriarch Mar Abraham Shimun with a crucifix. Others had hard time to save the situation and to disarm the patriarch's suspicion that the Roman Catholics were behind this expedition. Mar Shimun's suspicion was clear from the following words.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.27.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp.29-30.

The Pope, he said, has sent people from Rome, who has seduced part of our Church. His doctrine is new, but ours is old; we never changed our forms of worship, but we keep to, and abide by, what was delivered to us by the Apostles and our fathers; therefore you must know that we never change our doctrine nor our forms of worship.

Justin Perkins, an American Presbyterian missionary had already started work among the Assyrians. In 1834, Perkins founded his mission in Urmiyah. Rassam had met Perkins in 1833 in Malta. But he avoided Perkins in 1835 when Ainsworth and Rassam arrived in Kurdistan. Mar Shimun had already given permission for the Americans to start schools.

At the end of 1839 before his expedition with Ainsworth reached Kurdistan, Rassam obtained for himself a new appointment i.e. British Vice Consul of Mosul, his hometown. Thus, he could earn £ 250 per year.

The American missionary Asahel Grant expresses his view that the Assyrians will not accept “Romish faith”. He observes,⁴⁹

The Nestorians have nobly stood their ground, and they are still upon the watch-tower. As I approached their mountain fastnesses, their first inquiry was to know whether I was a “Catoleek;” declaring that they would not permit these “wolves in sheep’s clothing” to enter their country. Hitherto they have prevented the emissaries of Rome from entering their mountains. But the latter are looking with eagerness to this interesting field; and, while they are extending their labours in the East, no effort will be spared to spread their influence among the mountain tribes. Will Protestant Christians, to whom the Nestorians are stretching out their hands for help, suffer the golden harvest to fall into the garner of the Pope?

⁴⁹ Asahel Grant., *The Nestorians: Or, The Lost Tribes: John Murray*, London, 1841, p.48.

Concerning the proud faith and tradition of these mountain Christians, Dr. Asahel Grant recorded his reminiscences,⁵⁰

My thoughts went back to the days when the Nestorian missionaries were spread abroad throughout the East, and for more than a thousand years continued to plant and sustain the standard of the cross through the remote and barbarous countries of Central Asia, Tartary, Mongolia, and China; to the time when, as tradition and history alike testify, the Gospel standard was reared in these mountains by apostles' hands; for it was not from Nestorius, but from Thomas, Bartholomew, Thaddeus, and others, that this people first received the knowledge of a Saviour, as well be seen in the sequel.

In April 1842, Rassam's efforts to start an Anglican mission with a clergyman came into fruition. The Anglican clergyman was none other than Rassam's wife's brother, George Percy Badger born in 1815. He had been quickly ordained to priesthood (Deacon at Christmas, Priest in February). Badger also received instructions from S.P.C.K. and S.P.G. (Society for the Propagation of Gospel) similar to those received by Ainsworth and Rassam. But there was a preamble added to it, which is significant; because it speaks of the desire of the Catholic Chaldeans to be free from the control of Rome.⁵¹

It appears also by letters recently received from Mesopotamia, that a considerable number of the Chaldean Christians are very desirous of restoring the independence of their Church, and that Mar Elia of Alkosh, who claims the patriarchate of the Chaldeans, has proposed to enter into amicable relations with the Church of England.

Badger along with his wife and Fletcher left London on 2 April 1842 and reached Mosul in the beginning of November. Badger began his work in January 1843.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.54-55.

⁵¹ J.F. Coakley., 1992, op.cit., p.37.

Badger attempted to help not only the Assyrians but also the Catholic Chaldeans. Although a new Patriarch Mar Nicholas Zaia had been consecrated in 1840, he was not popular in Mosul. There were only two priests in the mission of the Italian Dominicans. About the ambition of the Rev. George Badger, Coakley comments.⁵²

He concluded that Rome was losing its hold on the church, and that the Church of England should step in. He thought that he saw an opportunity in the person of Mar Elia, the bishop of Alkosh, nephew of the late Patriarch John Hormuz. On the amazing pretext – suggested by Rassam no doubt – that it was right to ‘restore the patriarchal dignity to the old line’, he approached the bishop to urge him to claim the patriarchate and declare himself free of ‘the Papal Jurisdiction’. It is no wonder that Mar Zaia wrote to HBM Ambassador at Constantinople to complain of Badger’s interference. In any case Mar Elia would not co-operate.

Patriarch Mar Abraham Shimun received Badger and sent a letter dated 1 March / 17 February, 1843, addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury in which he requested the Archbishop “the eye of your grace may be directed to us”.⁵³

Mar Shimun was interested in the American Mission’s schools because Dr. Asahel Grant had friendship with Nurollah, the Kurdish chief. Still Badger tried to get British support to get the favour of the Patriarch.

On 29 June 1845, *The Record*, an evangelical newspaper charged that Badger was an emissary of evil who was doing an incalculable degree of mischief.⁵⁴

⁵² Ibid., pp.37-38.

⁵³ February 17 is the date in the Eastern Calendar which was equivalent to March 1 in the Western Calendar. In the 19th century the difference between these two calendars was 12 days. In the 20th century it is 13 days.

⁵⁴ J.F. Coakley., 1992, op.cit., p.40.

Before Badger's mission progressed further, by July 1843 Bedr Khan Beg, Kurdish Amir of Buhtan, massacred many Assyrians. On 29th July, the Patriarch Mar Abraham Shimun with several Assyrians came down to Mosul from the mountains. One of his brothers and his Archdeacon Qasha Auraham were with the Patriarch. The second attack was in October, Tiari was attacked this time. The total loss of Assyrians in the massacres of 1843 was about ten thousand. The Patriarch, his brother and servants were accommodated with Rassam and the archdeacon with his family stayed with Badger.

A brother of the Patriarch and others of his family fled to Urmiah in the autumn of 1843. The American missionaries supported them. But in June 1844, the Assyrians boycotted the schools of the American mission. The Patriarch wrote from Mosul demanding the expulsion of the American mission. The cause of this quarrel was that the tracts printed by the press of the American missionaries in Mosul were contrary to the doctrines of the Assyrian Church of the East. Justin Perkins thinks that Badger was behind this instigation to remove his rival mission.

Badger's mission ended abruptly and somewhat ingloriously. The S.P.C.K. and the S.P.G. decided to close down this mission. They explained that it was only a mission of enquiry and not meant as a permanent mission. Many have pinned the responsibility for the failure of the Mission on Badger. In January 1845, Badger was appointed a Chaplain in Bombay in India.

Although the mission of Rev. George Badger ended in 1845, the two British Consuls, Richard Stevens (1848 – 54) and Keith Abbot (1854 – 68) took keen interest in the affairs of the Assyrians. In 1865, a group of Assyrians appealed directly to Queen Victoria. In 1868, Keith Abbot told the Syrians.⁵⁵

Do not turn Papist, do not turn Methodist (*sic*), stay as you are. The Anglicans and the Nestorians have almost the same religion. The queen will send you missionaries.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.53.

On May 7, 1862 American missionary Rev. J.W. Shedd wrote to the Rev. Dr. Anderson D.D. The following paragraph is relevant for us to understand the Assyrian Church.

Through the representations of the English Consul and through fear of Russian influence, the authorities now promise the fullest redress of abuses to the Nestorians. For a time to come, there is a reasonable hope that the yoke will be lighter & if the Nestorians had the manhood and self control, to act with unity and discretion, much might be done. But any permanent redress is very difficult and improbable. You will hear from Oormiah, whether any real good comes out present promises.⁵⁶

Way back in March 1862 the American Missionaries had doubt that the Nestorians would join the Russian Church. We read in Herald and Recorder No. 81 published from Chicago,⁵⁷

The great event of the past month with us in Persia, has been a decided movement toward Russia on the part of the Nestorians. It is not impossible that we may awaken some of these mornings and find the mass of the Nestorians for whom we labour, in the bosom of the Russian Greek Church, and another morning may find us included in the map of Europe, by an extension of the Russian flag over this Province.

The second Anglican mission came in 1876. The Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Tait chose Revd. Edward L. Cutts (aged 52). The Archbishop had asked his own Chaplain Randal Davidson to go as a missionary to the Assyrians. Although he did not go to Kurdistan, later when he became Archbishop of Canterbury he was enthusiastic in helping the mission to the Assyrians.

Life was without any security. The Kurds often plundered the Assyrians. In 1897 Rev. F.F. Irwing, Anglican missionary (1893 – 98) writes of what he saw when he was going to Urmi. He was in Mawana near Nochea, the

⁵⁶ NEAR 20, Vol.294, *Nestorian Mission*, Vol.2, 1860-1870, Harvard University, USA.

⁵⁷ Herald and Recorder No.81, Vol. 2, Harvard University, USA, p.223.

headquarters of Metropolitan Mar Isaac Khananishu. He saw on the road the Assyrian refugees, 123 adults with many children moving on the roads without enough clothes or shoes in the biting cold.

When Rev. F.F. Irwing and his colleague Mr. Neesan⁵⁸ reached the vicinity of a small village of Mussalmans and the Kurds four Bagzadi made their appearance. They were “fierce looking, well built fellows and armed to the teeth”. When Mr. Neesan asked these Kurds whether they were not ashamed of demanding money from these refugees, they replied that, “We are guards of the road, and must have our toll, but if you will give us a present we will be content”. The English missionary writes:⁵⁹

This was of course pure imposition and only highway robbery in a polite form. We gave them six qrans, about half-a-crown. They took the money ungraciously, and insolently threw it on the ground at our horses' hoofs. We, however, firmly refused to give more, and after further parley, they consented to accept it, but said they must also have the goat belonging to the party. This we told them was “shame” to them and that we would on no account allow it.

⁵⁸ Yaroo Michael Neesan (1853-1937) was one of the earliest Assyrians to go to America. At the age of 28 or 29 in 1881 Yaroo (Jared) went to America to study theology in order to become ‘a missionary to his own people’. Yaroo Neesan’s daughter Beatrice was proposed in marriage to Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun’s brother Hormuzd. It did not take place. In 1915 Hormuzd was assassinated by the Turks. Beatrice died of shock as she saw the shooting of Bishop Mar Dinkha in February 1915 in front of the Neesan family. Neesan’s wife Gulnaz also died of grief witnessing the same shooting, 15 days later. Coakley writes that the cause of the death of both Beatrice and her mother was not fright or grief, but typhoid. Neesan stayed with the Assyrians during the First World War and in August 1918 joined the Assyrians in their long march to safety in Hamadan and stayed in Baqubah refugee camp near Baghdad. In April 1919 the Neesans (Neesan married an Assyrian nurse Hawa in 1917) accompanied Patriarch Mar Poulouse Shimun to the Monastery of Mar Mattai near Mosul, as the young Patriarch was suffering from Tuberculosis. In November 1922 Neesans sailed to Britain via India on their way to USA. They brought with them Rowena, sister of the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun, to go to school in England. In America Yaroo Neesan served as the priest of Mar Shimun Bar Sabbae Parish in Flint, Michigan. This Church building was completed two years after his death in 1939. Cf. J.F. Coakley, “*Yaroo M Neesan, A Missionary To His Own People*”, ARAM, Vol. 5: 1 & 2, Louven, 1993, pp.87-100.

⁵⁹ Rev. F.F. Irwing., in *Kurds And Christians*, Rev. F.N. Heazell and Mrs. Margoliouth, eds, Wells Gardner, Darton and Co. Ltd., London, 1911, pp.127-128.

Eventually they went sullenly away; and we passed on and reached Urmi without any further molestation.

In 1874, Rev. E.L. Cutts came to Kochanes. Patriarch Mar Ruwil Shimun called a council of bishops and maleks. There was only one Metropolitan at that time Mar Yosip Khananishu of Shamsdin. We do not know when he died. Mar Yosip Khananishu Metropolitan who died on 3 July 1977 was the successor of Mar Isaac Khananishu who died in 1918. This Mar Isaac Khananishu was the successor of Mar Yosip Khananishu who was living at the time of Rev. E.L. Cutts.

Mar Gawriel of Ardishai, Persia had become a Roman Catholic, but in 1874, he was present in the council of leaders who met Rev. E. L. Cutts, as he had already returned to his mother Church.⁶⁰

Before we enter into a detailed documentation of the 20th century, it is helpful to know the situation of the Assyrian Church towards the end of the 19th century.

As original records are not available at the headquarters of the Assyrian Church as the headquarters kept shifting from the mountains of Kurdistan to the present temporary headquarters in Chicago, it is futile to restrict our study to the official records.⁶¹

Nevertheless, the books published by different missionaries of that period are as good as primary sources. These books may have the prejudices of their authors, owing to their ecclesiastical affiliation. Yet, they are helpful in reconstructing a history of this ancient Church.

The Anglican authors have criticised the Presbyterian American authors. They in turn have assailed the Roman Catholics. It is understandable as

⁶⁰ According to the list of the faithful supplied by the Rev. E.L.Cutts in 1877, Bishop Mar Gawriel had 2888 families under his jurisdiction. It was more than his fellow prelates.

⁶¹ It is probable that one may come across some documents buried in Kochanes for safety. Some Assyrians buried their records and prayer books not to be taken by the enemies at the time of persecutions.

each mission was trying to “save” this ancient Church from its misery and “heresy”.

The well-known accounts of the Rev. George Percy Badger who wrote *Nestorians And Their Rituals*, though published only in 1852, refer to his visit to them in 1842. This book describes the atrocities committed by the Kurdish chief, Bedr Khan Beg in 1843 AD.

2.7 A Statistics Of The Assyrian Church In 1870 And In 1877

In 1870 the American Presbyterian Missionaries prepared a list of all Assyrians, Chaldeans and the Jacobites in Kurdistan area. The total estimates are about 12,070 families or a hundred thousand members calculating “about 8 souls to a house”. The report is in the handwriting of the missionaries.⁶²

Assyrians in 1870

Authority	Villages	Homes	Nestorians	Papal	Jacobites
I Van	193	5460	5300	80
II Seert & Mardin	61	1490	690	550	250
III Mousul	116	5020	870	3820	330
IV Baghdad	4	180	180
Total	374	12,070	6,860	4,630	580

The estimate of all is about 8 souls to a house, 100,000 in all.

⁶² Harvard University Library, USA. Thanks to Dr. J.F. Coakley in arranging for this writer to read the rare collection of the letters and reports. NEAR no. 19, Vol. No. 293, Vol. 1 (1860 - 1870) Report Feb. 1, 1870, No, 23.

The largest villages according to this estimate are

	Tribes	Villages	Homes	Nestorians	Papal	Jacobites
1	Tiary	46	1,600	1,600		
2	Julu ⁶³	17	560	560		
3	Tkhoma	5	550	550		
4	Nochea	24	500	500		
5	Jezirae	9	450		450	
6	Berwar	32	420	420		
7	Zaboor	15	430?		130	300?
8	Gawar	22	340	340		
9	Dirrenai	4	280	280		
10	Baz	5	260	260		
11	Mousul East of Tigris	11	2,830?	nil	2,580?	250

Only in Jezirai, Zaboor and Mousul there are (450+130+2,580) 3,160 Chaldean families. The Jacobites total 550 families.⁶⁴

The book by another Anglican missionary, the Rev.E.L.Cutts D.D. In *Christians Under The Crescent In Asia* published by S.P.C.K., London in 1877 is a very helpful guide to the study of the history of the Church in the second half of the 19th century.

In the Appendix to this Book Rev. E.L. Cutts gives very valuable statistics in respect of the Assyrian Church of his time.⁶⁵

I. Diocese of the Patriarch Mar Rewil Shimun

West of Ashitha in Mosul

Lower Tyari

Upper Tyari

⁶³ Jelu is the spelling generally used. The present writer has seen the spelling Julu only in this report. Jelu is one of the strong tribes of the Assyrians scattered all over the world today. Bishop Mar Joseph Sargis belongs to this tribe.

⁶⁴ The question marks are found in the original report.

⁶⁵ E.L.Cutts., *Christians Under The Crescent In Asia*, SPCK, London, 1877, pp.353-359.

District of Walts
Province of Dez
Berwar of Kochanes
Berwar Siweene
Berwar of Shwawootha
Bilijnaye

II. Diocese of Mar Sargis of Jelu

Tehoma (Goondooktha etc.)
Province of Jelu
Province of Baz
District of Rekan

III. Diocese of Mar Sleewa of Gawar

Province of Gawar
Derrenaye (Mar Bishu, Iyyel etc.)
Khananes
Province of Albak
District of Lewun
Noodes
Teall District

IV. Diocese of Mar Khananeesho, the Metropolitan

Village of Halana, Kictuna, Shaput, Dara etc.
District of Bradusnai

Oroomiah

V. Diocese of Mar Yohannan

Villages of Gavilan, Arduk, Karajalu, Nazi etc.'

VI. Diocese of Mar Yonan

Villages of Superghan, Chane Shan, Mushawa etc.

VII. Diocese of Mar Goriel

Villages of Ardishai, Takia, Alkai, Bahari,
Goktapa, Karaghoy, Gulpershan, Digala etc.

Assyrian Church of the East

It is to be noted that Turkey had four dioceses and Persia had three. It had a total of 290 Churches, 248 priests and 10,638 families. Counting seven to a family Rev. Cutts' statement concludes that the total number of Assyrians at that time was 74,466.

Some would say along with the traveller Ainsworth (*Travels in Syria etc.*) that a Syrian family in the last century had an average of eight members. Anyhow, the total number of the Assyrians around 1880 was about 80,000. The separate figures of each bishop are also useful.

	Churches	Parishes	Families
1 Patriarch	88	81	2,274
2 Metropolitan	43	36	1,067
3. Mar Sargis	38	37	1,650
4 Mar Sleeva	56	43	1,497
5 Mar Yohannan	23	22	972
6 Mar Yonan	2	1	290
7 Mar Goriel	40	28	2,888
	290	248	10,638

Out of 290 Churches the Assyrians had, the name of Mar Geevarghese tops the list. The top ten names are the following:

1. Mar Geevarghese	63
2. Marth Mariyam	61
3. Mar Kuriakose	26
4. Mar Yohannan	13
5. Mar Shallitha	12
6. Mar Shimun	9
7. Beni Shmoni	8
8. Mar Esthapanose	7
9. Mar Sargees	5
10. Mar Sawa	5

Mar Thoma, Mar Savrisho, Mar Slewa had four Churches each. Others had three or less.

Mar Abraham, Mar Odishu, and Mar Goriel had three each. Mar Odisho who has three Churches and Mar Abdisho who has one Church is perhaps the same saint.

Mar Moshe, Mar Addai, Mar Yaqob, Mar Mastreena, Mar Yusuf, Mar Schoona, Mar Yonan etc. had two each. Mar Bishu, Mar Ishu, Mar Qardagh, Mar Aziza, Mar Abdishu, Mar Avraham, Patros Paulos, Mar Davoud, Mar Khanaia, Mar Michael, Mar Daniel, Kadishta, Mar Serapion etc. had only one Church each.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the Church in India was still surviving. But their Metropolitan Mar Abdisho Thondanat expired in Trichur on 16 November 1900. The Church in Trichur had to face the protracted civil suits started by Bishop E.M. Medlycott who had already left for England. Although Michael Augustine brought by Elia Yohannan Mellus was the “acting bishop”, he too was getting old.

In Persia, Mar Yonan, Bishop of Superghan, went to Russia to explore the possibility of merging with the Russian Orthodox Church, if the Russian government could give protection from the Kurds and other Muslim groups. They believed that only a Christian country could give them adequate protection from the Kurds and other Muslims, among whom they live. A letter dated 4 April 1898 sent from Persia, preserved in the archives of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Lambeth Palace Library refers to the gravity of the situation in which the Assyrians found themselves and their urgent need of some help from the Christian nations like Russia and England.⁶⁶

Since the murder of Mar Gawriel and the flight of the Christians from Nochea and Gawar there has only been one Bishop for the whole plain, namely Mar Yonan of Superghan, and he is now in Russia, negotiating for the establishment of the Russian Church here. The plain during the vacancy of see lapsed to the Matran, who since

⁶⁶ Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury dated 4 April 1898, Lambeth Palace Library, London, England.

July has been in Persia, having made his escape from Qudshanis under the protection of our consul at Van.

In December 1899 or 1900, Mar Yonan, Bishop of Uqri in Berwar, died. The vacant diocese was absorbed into that of Mar Isho Yabhalaha of Duri.

The condition of the Assyrian Church at the end of the 19th century was quite unsatisfactory.

The Assyrian Church of the East was expecting help from the foreign Christian countries for some help as a protection from the unfriendly Turks and Kurds. The Church of the East began to dwindle in their membership. Although the Anglican missionaries did not convert the members of the old Church, the American Presbyterian missionaries were keen on converting some members of this ancient church. The Americans considered this ancient church as a dead church based on the rituals rather the faith of the Bible.

The Americans conducted Bible classes and encouraged the Assyrians to accept a faith based on the precepts of the Protestants. The Assyrians used to call the evangelical Assyrians 'the Americans'. Later 'The Reformed Nestorian Church' eventually broke off from the Old Church and formed an evangelical Synod. The Persian Government recognized the Reformed church.

Some travelers went around collecting money from philanthropic Christians in the West. Some remarks made about the Assyrians by some foreigners are that of less than respect to them.

The contact with the British and American missionaries helped them to learn English language. Therefore they could travel to the West.

The Church began to dwindle in their membership. Although the Anglican missionaries did not convert the Assyrians, Americans converted some of them to Presbyterian, the French Lazarist converted some to Catholic

Chaldean, and the Germans converted some of them to be Lutherans. The Russian Orthodox Church converted them to be Orthodox. In this process of religious proselytism, the Church of the East began to decline.

**DECLINE AND MURDER OF THE
PATRIARCH 1900 – 1918
FROM PATRIARCH MAR RUVEL
SHIMUN UNTIL THE MURDER OF
PATRIARCH MAR BENYAMIN SHIMUN**

CHAPTER III

3.1 Introduction

The beginning of the 20th century was a dark and sad period in the history of the Assyrian Church of the East. The Patriarch Mar Ruvel Shimun was getting old. The Assyrians in Persia were interested in joining with the Russians. The Assyrians from the Turkish region were not satisfied with the help and protection given to them by the English missionaries. They feel that the great English nation was not doing all what they could do in protecting them atleast as a minority community using the diplomatic channels.

At the dawn of the 20th century, the Assyrians were under the rule of Patriarch Mar Rouvel Shimun. The Kurds and Turks were persecuting his people. The Anglican missionaries were giving some small help to educate the Assyrians. The liturgical and secular books were being printed in the press of the Archbishop of Canterbury in Urmi.

The American Presbyterians were also doing their work in Persia among the Assyrians.¹ The main difference in their approach was that the Presbyterians converted the Assyrians to their faith while the Anglicans were doing their best to help the Assyrians and not to start an Anglican Church. It was a mission of help. Its intentions were to help and strengthen the Assyrians by educating their clergy and the laity.

The Chaldeans were trying to gain an upper hand over the Assyrians. It is not easy to fix a date when the Assyrian Church became smaller than the Chaldean Church. The turn of the century was the probable period in which the Chaldean Church grew numerically bigger than the Assyrian Church.

¹ The American Presbyterians in Urmia area had started a male college called Urmia College with faculties of Medicine, Theology and Arts and Sciences, a female college named Fiske Seminary, two Hospitals one for men and one for women. Their mission Press installed in 1839 had printed, by 1900 AD, three million pages in both the old and modern Syriac.

Ever since the split in 1552 AD at the time of John Sulaqa and his appointment as the Patriarch of the Chaldeans by the Pope, the Chaldeans or the Church of the East under the Pope did not gain majority. By the turn of the century as a result of the vigorous activities of the French Lazarist missions in the area and the Dominican missionaries in Mosul the Chaldean Church grew strong.

In India Mar Abdisho Thondanatt Metropolitan consecrated by Mar Ruvel Shimun Patriarch himself in 1862 AD at Kochanes expired on 16 November 1900. The Church in India based in Thrissur was vexed by the litigation in the wake of the civil suit filed by Bishop A.E. Medlycott. After he lost the civil suit he moved to England as an auxiliary Bishop in Westminster, London handing over the mantle of his Vicariate to Msgr. John Menachery in 1896. Let us turn our attention to the Middle East where the action was.

In the letter dated September 1902 F.N. Heazel² writes to the Archbishop of Canterbury about Amadia. The town of Amadia is two days journey south of Tyari. One has to pass through Chail and cross the Zab river in order to reach Amadia. The people who met Rev. Heazel welcomed him, remembered Canon A.J. Maclean who was missionary during 1886 - 1891. The Assyrians complained to Rev. F.N. Hezell against the poor plight of Mar Shimun. He writes to the Archbishop of Canterbury.³

My journey was interpreted as a sign of renewed interest from Quadshanis in their welfare. I was asked both here and in Alqosh represent to your Grace how much the Syrians hoped for an English priest to live and work amongst them. It was in Amadia that I met one of the few remaining Nestorian bishops, Mar Ishu of Duri, who pleaded earnestly for support both from our Mission and also from Mar Shimun. He said that unless some further help were forthcom-

² Rev. F. N. Hezell, a missionary of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Assyrian Mission, later in 1913 edited the reports and letters of the members of his mission and co-edited, along with Mrs Margoliouth the book *Kurds & Christians* often quoted in this dissertaion.

³ F.N.Hezell, in *Kurds & Christians*, F.N. Hezell and Mrs. Margoliouth, eds, Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., Ltd., London, 1913,pp.151-152.

ing they could not stand against the persistent efforts of the Dominican missionaries from Mosul.

After leaving Amadia I went to Alqosh and Mosul. The road lay through many Syrian villages, which at one time owed allegiance to Mar Shimun; but now they have all, save a small number, joined the Latin Obedience and are known as Uniat Chaldeans. In Alqosh I saw signs of a great educational work being done by Dominicans; the Syrians there seemed more prosperous and better cared for, though I heard not a few complaints from priests who were dissatisfied with their new ecclesiastical rulers, and much more so with the Liturgy which had been imposed on them.

The same missionary mentions the meeting he had with the Jacobite Mafrain Mar Dinoysius. The missionary writes that “Mosul had long since passed out of the hands of Mar Shimun’s predecessors”. He concludes his comments by expressing his wish, “One felt what a blessing it would be if a great Syrian Church could rise out of the ruins of Nestorianism and Monophysitism”.

Around 1902 W.H. Browne writes about the discipline in the Assyrian Church. The missionary claims that credit for the return of the spiritual discipline should go to the Archbishop’s Assyrian Mission. People began to demand a council be called and canon law be enforced. The following words from Rev. Browne’s letter give glimpses of the situation way back to the beginning of the 20th century in the Assyrian Church.⁴

Disputes as to property have been decided according to Canon Law, and offenders are sometimes punished as it directs, and last year a most important and surprising sentence was pronounced upon reference to the book of the Canons. But lately two bigamists, who had been emboldened to commit their crime by the impunity of former offenders, were tried by a court of three archdeacons, two

⁴ W.H. Browne, In *Kurds & Christians*, op.cit., p.156.

priests, the Rabban David, Benyamin, Mar Shimun's nephew and probable successor, and some of Mar Shimun's cousins, who had at first protected one of the criminals, but now are professing eager churchmanship. It was found that both the men and women and any should harbour them must be cast out of the Church; and Mar Shimun confirmed the finding, as well as another sentence of fasting and subsequent restoration by public absolution, which passed on another offender against marriage law.

The above report of W.H. Browne deals with another important issue of a boy bishop who was 13 years old in a hereditary system, which is no longer practised.⁵

Called in his innocence to the high office of bishop, he might by grace have lived up to his vocation; but one fears lest he may rather act as was "naturally to be expected". It seems as if the pressure of poverty and the necessity of providing for his household led him to acquire money in ways that were on a level much below the aspirations he professed last year. Persons who are not old bachelors like me, will say that this is not wonderful and is nothing to make a talk about. Well, but it is something to pray about. It is a great thing for a boy in power to have lofty ideals, and intentions of clinging to what is right in spite of evil influence and bad example. It is a great thing if a young bishop - and he could not have become a bishop in his youth, if God had not permitted others to make him one - be preserved in his integrity and unspotted by the world. A really good bishop, and one who trusted to God to build his house up, if he pleased, and who was far from covetousness and from crooked ways, would be priceless treasure here.

This boy bishop of Jelu namely Zaia Sargis who died in 1951 was in Qudshanis in the winter of 1902 to visit Patriarch Mar Ruvel Shimun. Browne narrates what Petros, Mar Shimun's trusty retainer, who was "a

⁵ Ibid., p.157.

sort of nursery governess to the younger members of Patriarchal household” started lecturing on St. Matthew. ⁶

On the “right eye” the commentary was “That is you, little Father, You are one of the eyes of the people—the right eye of us mountaineers; and if you do not become learned, and also virtuous, and an upholder of the faith and laws of Christ, we shall pluck you out and cast you from us. It is better to go into the kingdom of heaven without you than to go to hell with you.”

On another occasion: “The ox is you, Bishop” “What! You do not call me a bull?” “Yes I do—you are Christ’s bull. Nay, you are Christ’s buffalo—much better than a corn, that He may gather in the good grain; and He Himself will tend you and take care of you, and feed you, and bathe you, and cherish you in the stable of Paradise”.

3.2 The Patriarch’s Death In 1903

Mar Ruvel Shimun Patriarch died on 29 March 1903. Rev. W.H. Browne wrote the following appreciation of that Patriarch in his report to the Archbishop of Canterbury.⁷

But too much had been made of Mar Shimun’s indecision, want of vigour, and changes of mind. Perhaps hardly anyone who has not had actual experience of it can realise what it is to be blocked in on every side and to see fresh dangers threaten at every step taken. One course of action is impossible on account of the opposition of the Government, another will rouse the Kurds to fury, a third will alienate the Syrians and make them uncontrollable, while a fourth will provoke the members of the household; yet no one course is so obviously the right one that it ought to be followed at all costs. On the other hand, to sit still and do nothing has the fallacious comfort that it precipitates nothing and may delay the impending disaster, or give time for “something to turn up”.

⁶ Ibid., p.158.

⁷ Ibid., pp.164 -165.

There were occasions on which the late prelate acted with quick decision and preserving vigour to the dismay of governors and others, whose dismissal he obtained by representations made to the Sultan or the Vali, and of his own chieftains, & c., whom he summarily deprived of their ill-used dignities. He remained some nine months in Julamerk – he who could not bear to be away from home – to secure the release of Tyari men, who had been falsely convicted. He lived in a poor room amid much discomfort of body and mind, and preserved in spite of the dismissal of officials who were friendly to him. Afraid to leave the seat of local government, he celebrated his Communion on a rock on the hillside at Eastertide and other great festivals. Guns were discharged outside his residence at night and alarms of thieves were made, in the hope of frightening him away from his post. Commissioners, sent to examine into the conviction, sent in false reports, and Mar Shimun obtained new commissioners from the Sultan until the innocent were released.

If it be impossible to live in this country without criticising some of the officials who represent, or misrepresent, the Government, Mar Shimun was honestly loyal to the Sultan; and this loyalty and his sound common-sense preserved him from yielding to tempting schemes, which promised greatness and freedom, e.g. when Sheikh Obeidullah of Neri invited his co-operation in rebellion. It is understood that it was to mark his appreciation of his Beatitude's behaviour and services that the Sultan decorated him with the order of Osmanieh, in addition to that of the Mejidieh, which he had received a couple of years after his consecration. The deceased prelate was a warm admirer of Queen Victoria and of The English nation, kept alive the memory of our procuring the exile of Bedr Khan Beg and the Mira (Emir) of Hakkiari, and of our recovering so many of the Syrian children who had been carried captives to distant regions.

March 15th, 1903—Patriarch Mar Rouvel Shimun consecrated his nephew Benjamin Bishop and Metropolitan, thus indicating him as his successor.

March 29th—Patriarch Mar Rouvel Shimun died.

April 10th—Mar Isaac Khananishu, Metropolitan, arrived at Qudshanis from Shamsdin.

April 12th—Mar Isaac Khananishu consecrated Mar Benyamin Shimun Catholicos Patriarch

3.3 Mar Benyamin Shimun As The New Patriarch

The letter dated April 3rd 1903 from Qudshanis, Julamerk, Vilayat of Van, Turkey in Asia was sent by the English Mission to the Archbishop of Canterbury by Constantinople and Van telling about the death of Mar Ruwel Shimun, Patriarch and the effects of the consecration of his nephew Benyamin, aged about 16,⁸ as the new Catholicos Patriarch.⁹

Beniamin, son of Ishai (Jesse), should succeed to the patriarchate, and title of Mar Shimun. He has of late been the *natir Kursi custos sedis*. Sometime ago the successor was Mar Auraham, consecrated in 1884, cousin of the late Patriarch.

Mar Shimun is a Papa-re', bishop of the nation, and temporal ruler of six "ashiret valleys", still independent of the Turkish yoke. The late Mar Shimun was very loyal to the Assyrian Mission. Certainly on one occasion great promises were held out to him by the Dominicans, if he would join the Roman Catholic Church. Gifts were sent by the American Mission to induce him to allow them a footing in Kurdistan. The inducements were held out by a gentleman at Oxford for him to form a Nestorian church in England. But Mar Shimun was firm.

His family was unhappily split in half. The opposition faction was headed by Nimrod, who endeavoured to promote the aims of the Mosul Dominicans. Nimrod endeavoured to get the local Turkish

⁸ Mar Benyamin Shimun was born in 1886. The exact date is not known. When he was consecrated on 12 April 1903, he must have completed 16 years and going to be 17.

⁹ A letter of A.H.Lang to Archbishop of Canterbury dated April 3, 1903, from Qudshanis, preserved in the Archbishop's Palace at Lambeth, London.

government on his side against Mar Shimun and the Turks gladly promote discussion among the Christians in order to conquer the *ashirets*.

In 1899 it was reported to the Pope that the Nestorian nation had "joined the Catholic Church". As a fact nothing at all happened. But no doubt there was intrigue.

When an Oriental ruler dies, strange things may happen - or may not. If the new ruler takes the line of the last, intrigue and faction can do little harm, especially as the absence of proselytism, and absence of gain on - advantage to the Mission have made a deep impression on the Syrian bishops and the nation?

The Russians have declined to go to Turkey; the Americans would not be received by the Syrians there. The important portion of the ashiret mountaineers, the *Tyarii*, would be very unlikely to join Rome. It is not easy to see what great changes could take place, even with a change of policy on part of the Patriarch. But there is no reason to anticipate a change of policy.

When a letter arrives announcing the death, it would be in accordance with Eastern ideas for your grace to send a formal letter written in classical Syriac, "fair hand".

It might now be an opportunity to consider certain points: —(proposed at former committees)

(1) Some 6000 Syrians joined the Russian Church for political help. Should not the rest avow orthodoxy for the sake of retaining our help.?

(2) Ought pressure to be put on Mar Shimun to induce the abrogation of hereditary bishops?

(3) Ought Mar Shimun to be asked to restrain the bishops of ordain-

ing unworthy candidates by a written and sealed undertaking.

(4) Ought not the spiritual character of the Mission to be impressed on Mar Shimun, and the fact that we can never give political help?

In short, ought not the Mission to supply more directly the clergy for the Assyrian Church?

(5) The very difficult question of removal in part or whole to Van.

I doubt whether any of the Mission, except Mr. Browne, could fully explain the factions at Qudshanis, and give the names of those on each side, and state their aims. But to the questions proposed I could say

(1) Effect of death - none. If any, a Rome ward movement, partial.

(2) Steps to be taken - only assuming that A: A: M: will continue its former policy.

I am,

Your Grace's obedient servant,

A. H. Lang

In 1905 some Assyrians left the Russian Church to join United Lutheran Church of America. John Joseph states.¹⁰

A Swedish-American Augustana Synode employed a Nestorian priest who conducted two-day schools. The Evangelical Association for the Advancement of the Nestorian Church, founded at Berlin in 1906, employed a Nestorian priest who had Lutheran training in Germany. For about ten years a German Orient Mission maintained an orphanage outside Urmiah for Nestorian refugees from the mountains. The English Plymouth Brethren employed a few priests in a mission of their own. Other smaller missions were connected with

¹⁰ John Joseph, *The Nestorians And Their Muslim Neighbours*, Princeton, 1961, p.123.

the American Dunkards, the Holy Methodists, the American Southern Baptists and Northern Baptists, and the English Congregationalists. There was perhaps no missionary field in the world where there were so many rival "Christian" forces at work as were found in Urmiyah at the beginning of this century, all struggling to get predominance among these few people. Some of the results of this unseemly struggle were demoralization, arrogance on the part of the Persian Christians, the transformation of religion into a sport and trade.

The report of the missions shows how ably the young Patriarch was discharging his duties.

Soon after the 16-year-old Patriarch assumed his duties in April 1903 he asked his long time friend Awimelk (Abimalek, son of Rev. Eshai of Mar Bishu) to become a deacon. Abimalek, 25 years old, was the best student in the Assyrian school. He had been learning English from W.H. Browne along with Benyamin and his elder sister Surma.

Abimalek was not even a deacon. The young Patriarch succeeded in persuading him to be a deacon in 1903 then a priest and Archdeacon in 1904. The young Archdeacon Abimalek served as the special representative of the Patriarch until December 1907.

In May 1905 the young Patriarch replied to the petition of the Church in India which was seeking a Metropolitan to be sent by the Patriarch. This Syriac letter was written in the handwriting of Archdeacon Awimalek dated 23 *Ieyar* (May) 1905. The Syriac letter, the original is preserved in the Metropolitan Palace, Trichur built by Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan in 1928. An English translation is preserved in the Lambeth Palace Library. The lengthy letter begins as follows.¹¹

To the honourable Mar Augustine bishop, and his beloved sons,
priests, deacons & principal men of Malabar

¹¹ Letter of Arch Deacon Awimalek, dated 23, *Ieyar* (May), 1905.

In December 1907 Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun consecrated Archdeacon Abimalek Bishop and Metropolitan for Malabar and India at Mar Shallitha Church in Qudshanis and sent him to India where the 29 and a half year old Metropolitan took charge on 27th February 1908.

The Patriarch managed the affairs of the Church well. In March 1908, he visited the village of Toni. Qasha Sahda, the priest of that village was an “almost absolutely unlearned man, and a cripple”. Some purists objected to this priest doing priestly duties, as a maimed man should not be a priest.

The Patriarch wanted to know how he became a cripple. His supporters explained that a Kurd shot in his arm when he was protecting his daughter from a Kurd. The Patriarch gave his verdict that “a man does not annul his Qashaship if he confesses in persecution and is crippled by the tormentors”, and he adds that “this seems to me to be a case like that. Let Qasha Sahda celebrate without fears”.¹²

Four hours distance from Van there was a village called Khino. At the end of the century the Roman Catholics “scattered therein much money, for they had four Qashas there”. All except four of the 35 houses became Catholics. The Assyrian Church was 250 years old and was “near to ruin, and rain and snow from heaven fell into the sanctuary”. The Roman Catholics built another Church in the village, and “were sucking up all the people from it”.

In 1909, the Assyrians rebuilt this Church with their labour. The only cash that changed hands was 6 pounds, 14 shillings and 4 pence, which was entirely paid to the Armenian carpenter-mason. The people of Khino requested the Patriarch to send a bishop to consecrate this Church. The Patriarch sent Mar Yabalaha, the young bishop of Berwar, who was a student in Van school at that time. On the last Sunday of September 1909 (Festival of Cross was on September 26 according to old calendar) Mar Yabalaha, consecrated the altar with sacred olive oil and placed the vessel containing Melka (holy leaven) in the Church.

¹² F.N.Heazell., in *Kurds And Christians*, op.cit., p.178.

The Patriarch's negotiations with the authorities were successful. In 1909, a new vali (governor) was appointed for the province. It was the custom for the vali to make the personal acquaintance of the leaders in his province. Since Qudshanis was too far and difficult to travel, the vali asked Mar Shimun to meet him at Bashkala. Unfortunately, they missed each other there. So the patriarch went to Van and met the vali. About this meeting, we read in *Kurds & Christians*.¹³

His business with the Vali, of course, was political only, and was concerned for the most part with the Tyari-Berwar question, and with the question of the subjection of Christians to the conscription, to which they are liable under the constitution. As regards the first matter, Mar Shimun was at least able to put the Christian side of the question fully before a governor who gave him a fair hearing, though he may not have the power to do all that we should desire.

The fact is that the government are not anxious to rouse "the Kurdish question" until they have satisfied other points of more European importance. On the second point, it is of course too much to expect that Christians should welcome the liability to military service, which is the most tangible thing that the new *regime* has brought them as yet, beneficial though the discipline is likely to be to the whole *melet* in the long run. Many had begged their Patriarch to try to secure them their old exemption; but this is, of course, quite beyond his power, even if it was his wish. All that he hopes or even desires is that Christians shall be enrolled in separate companies (not battalions), in order that facilities may be given them for the observance of their religious duties; this much, there is good hope that they may obtain.

In any case the making of the personal acquaintance of the Vali by Mar Shimun is a good and useful thing; each seems to have personally liked the other.

¹³ Ibid., p.184.

As we do not have an official version of the affairs of the Church after the consecration of Mar Benyamin Shimun Patriarch on 12th April 1903, we have to depend on the letters of the Anglican missionaries who were close to the Patriarch in that period.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission abandoned the work in Oormiah because the Russian Orthodox Church had taken most of the Assyrians under their fold.

3.4 Van City

Thus, the headquarters of the Anglican mission was established in Van. Main buildings were put on a six-acre land, at the cost of 230 pounds. In this land there were a fine orchard with good old fruit trees, a large vineyard, and enough land to cultivate wheat, potatoes, etc.

Rev. O.H. Parry has written a beautiful description of the city of Van, the land and about the mission working there. ¹⁴

Van lies some 1,500 feet higher than Urmi and 5,600 feet above the sea: the summer is therefore shorter and cooler than at Urmi, and we enjoyed the loveliness of innumerable orchards and budding elms and poplar trees. The tulip and narcissus abound, a glorious mixture of snow and blood, no unsuitable symbol of the country of mountain and massacre. The houses are most absurdly unsuitable to the climate, the windows almost exceeding the remaining wall space; but we were surprised by the contrast with Urmi, where all the streets are faced by dead mud walls. Scarcely any burnt bricks are used, as the earth used for building is of unusually durable consistency for building.

Of the various religious agencies, the Armenians claim the first place in interest, with their history of two thousand five hundred years, and their unrivalled energy and national patriotism.

¹⁴ O.H.Parry, in *Kurds & Christians*, op,cit., p.166.

After his consecration the young patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun could not make much re-building. The financial poverty was there. Kurdish attacks were not usual. Political protection was available to some extent, by the help of Anglican missionaries. Schools were there, but not adequate, as demands were higher than the limited resources that the missionaries could provide. W.S.Bowdon reports on this aspect in his letter dated 13 May 1907 about the villages around Van area.¹⁵

We have five schools amongst these villages; those that I saw seemed to have been working satisfactorily this winter, though in one large village, *Serai*, containing nearly one hundred Syrian houses, the school ought to be much larger. The difficulty in this case, as in many others, is to find a suitable room and large enough to hold the children. Some of the churches were sadly in need of repairs; the villagers do what they can, but all are so poor that they cannot afford to buy the necessary timber to make their walls secure and the roofs watertight. We have been able gradually to supply all these churches with what is requisite for the Holy Eucharist, owing to the labour of kind friends at home, and most of them with the necessary service-books.

Van lies at a distance of about 100 miles from Qudashanis the headquarters of the Patriarch. It is 3 hours of railway journey. It took 60 hours for the missionaries and the Assyrian boys to go to the Patriarchate. An interesting trip of 2 missionaries, 5 teachers, 31 boys and 12 or 14 porters from the Van school to the Patriarch at Qudashanis in 1907 is informative for us today to have an appreciation of the unfortunate Assyrians in the early part of the 20th century.¹⁶

I was filled with amazement at the powers of endurance displayed by the boys, for it was the time of the Great Fast, and so no animal food could be eaten, not even milk, butter, or cheese and their only food consisted of bread and raisins. Imagine what an English boy

¹⁵ W.S.Bowdon., in *Ibid.*, p.168.

¹⁶ F.J.Blamire Brown., in *Ibid.*, p.169.

would say to doing such a journey under such conditions! I am sure the temper of even the smartest member of a Cadet Corps or Lads' Brigade would have disappeared by the end of the first day, and what a grumbling there would be! But except once, when the small bishop-designate of Gawar was entering on a fight with a boy three times his size, there were no signs of ill humour or grouching.

Report from Van in Oct. 1908 informs that Patriarch Benyamin's brothers Hormizd (aged 17), Zaia and Paulus (the one who became Patriarch ten years later)¹⁷ joined the school. Along with these V.I.P. students their cousin Daniel,¹⁸ son of Malik Ismail of Tyari (grand father of the present Zia d Malik Yacob d Malik Ismael who is a member of the Syrian Parliament for many years) as well as Bishop of Berwar Mar Yawallaha joined the school. This young bishop had to flee from his diocese to Qudshanis to save his life from Kurd, Mira Reshid. Although young for a bishop, he had grown a beard, has studied for four years before Patriarch could consent to consecrate him. Rev. W.A. Wigram thinks that it was to be counted as credit to his young bishop to return to school to study when it become difficult for him to work in his diocese. Wigram remarks.¹⁹

In doing this he has faced that which a Syrian fears more than anything else in the world, the fear of tongues. There have been plenty of people to tell him that for a Bishop to go to school again is *iba* (shame), and to face the fear of *iba* is really much for a Syrian to do.

Wigram's further remarks about the boys of his school give us a glimpse into the Assyrian church of his time. These remarks are quoted here not to belittle the boys but to let us have a peep into them.²⁰

¹⁷ Zaia and Poulouse were 15 years of age. They were twins.

¹⁸ Daniel's brother Shlimon married Romie, the sister of the then Patriarch, Mar Benjamin Shimun.

¹⁹ W.A. Wigram., in *Ibid.*, p.172.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.172 -173.

Two Qashas of Ashitha, who have previously been full of suspicion of us and all our works, have now asked to be allowed to send their sons, and they have been received. It is a gratifying thing to see old prejudices thus melting away.

Among other boys whom we have had before, but who have come back to us again, we will mention the names of Jonathan, the sharp and very bellicose *Natir Kursi* of Gawar (his quarrelsome habits have earned him the nickname of “Mar Barsoma”), and also Saypu of Lizan, who has won a reputation as a warrior also, but in sterner fields.

When the Kurds came down to his village, in the burning of the valley of Lizan, he virtuously hid all his books in hole in the rocks,²¹ and then formed one of the band who, by their defence of the bridge that crosses the Zab at that point, saved the whole of Upper Tyari from the fate that had befallen the side valley. Saypu went into the fight with a borrowed flintlock. He came out of it with a breech-loader of his own, captured from its late owner. This lad will never make a teacher, or a priest, but we could do with more of his stamp in this nation.

We left Van in April, very glad to get our boys out of a city where revolutionary outbreak had been rather grimly repressed, and where we lived in continual anxiety that our boys might get into trouble, not from any complicity with the revolutionaries, but from their ineradicable longing to live on the roof and see the fun.

3.5 Before The First World War

Wigram writes the happy outcome of the peaceful revolution. He comments “Here in Hakkari, a remote place, no change can come speedily”. His further remarks touch upon a very relevant point. The Anglicans do not

²¹ It is possible that every time the enemy attacked the Assyrians must have had their valuable books hidden underground. Thus many manuscripts and letters are hidden in Turkey even today.

want to convert the Assyrians. They want to strengthen the Church by giving help in educating the Assyrian youngsters. Inter communion is the final goal and not any sort of merger unionism.²²

Probably the changes will have another effect: with less need for foreign protection, many who embraced the faith of foreigners will return to their old faith, and the national Churches will gain great strength; and of this there are signs already among the Armenians at Van.

The opportunity for our Mission, which has always set its face against proselytism, is great. We may come to a practical discussion of the terms of inter-communion, which, as material aims are less to the fore, may be based on a truer and deeper foundation. God grant this may be so.

Not only the Patriarch, but all members of the Patriarchal family were honoured. When Hormizd, 19 year old brother of Mar Benyamin Shimun who was studying in Van school, visited the Assyrians they paid great respects although he is a layman.²³ The Anglican missionary thinks such welcome to Hormizd as “quaint and pathetic”.²⁴

“Now we shall prosper, now our crops will be good, and our flocks and herds will increase, for the brother of Mar Shimun has come to bring us a blessing”, was the greeting given him in one village, that of Ermanis... In Zel, which is hidden away in the recesses of the Chokh range of mountains, “Had you not come, *Kesi*,²⁵ we should have turned Chaldean, or perhaps Protestant; we have been left alone by our Patriarch for so long, and we thought that he had quite forgotten us. Now we know that Mar Shimun cares.”

²² W. A. Wigram, op. cit., pp.173 -174.

²³ If Hormizd were not killed in 1915, he would have been the Patriarch in 1918 when Mar Benyamin Shimun was assassinated instead of his younger brother Poulouse.

²⁴ W. A. Wigram, op. cit., p.176.

²⁵ *Kesi* is the way by which the Assyrians address their bishops and even the Patriarch.

Mar Isaac Khananishu Metropolitan was a well-respected Metropolitan who is next to the Patriarch. Wigram writes in *Kurds and Christians*.²⁶

The Matran himself is certainly the best read of the Bishops of his Church who are now to be found in Kurdistan, though Mar Timotheus of Malabar is most likely his equal. None, too, can doubt his deep personal piety and love for his Church. His cast of mind, however, is very conservative, and he has a deep reverence which is not always intelligent for all that "our Fathers" have written, or are even supposed to have written. He is, moreover, a weak and timid man, and long oppression at the hands of the Sheikh (who he calls "that great one") has knocked out of him what little spring there may ever have been in his character. Fear of rousing the suspicions of this master of his keeps him from doing much that he might do with safety for the Church that he loves. He has never visited Mar Shimun, or allowed the Patriarch to visit him, since the occasion of his consecration in 1903, and he will not even go about his own diocese lest the Sheikh should fear that some dire plot is afoot. He is much better off, in a worldly sense, than most of his brethren. Some, indeed, say that he has too much to lose, and would do his work better in comparative poverty; this, however, is an accusation that we have heard levelled against even English bishops, and we must own that Mar Khananishu makes good use of his property.

The above quoted letter written in 1908 gives us a glimpse of Mar Issac Khananishu Metropolitan. His successor Mar Yosip Khananishu was acting Patriarch from 1973 till the consecration of the present Patriarch on 17 October 1976. This well respected prelate died on 3rd July 1977 in Baghdad.²⁷ About the qualities of this youth W.A.Wigram wrote.²⁸

²⁶ W. A. Wigram, op. cit., pp.187 -188.

²⁷ Unfortunately the date of the death of Mar Yosip Khananisho Metropolitan is often stated as 6th July, 1977. The fact is that he died on 3rd July and he was buried on 6th July.

²⁸ W.A. Wigram, op. cit., p.188.

His *Natir Kursi*, a youth of seventeen, whose manners are singularly attractive, lives with him, and this youth (whose name is Yosip) has been already prematurely admitted to priest's orders. We made an effort to persuade his Grace to send this lad, if not to Van, at least to the Patriarch's house at Qudshanis, that he might learn that there is a part of the world outside the shadow of the Sheikh; but though he promised to consider this, I fear that his nerves will not allow him to act on the suggestion.

The question of inter communion, which is relevant even today was discussed in the above letter. This should show some light in today's discussion of inter communion with the Roman Catholics or Orthodox.²⁹

Of his own accord, the Matran brought forward, in conversation, the question of terms of inter communion. It was his idea, as it is that of many of the nation, that the unofficial visit of the bishop of Gibraltar³⁰ a year ago was to settle this vexed question with Mar Shimun, and it is probably significant that this erroneous idea was welcomed by practically all the nation.

We assured the Matran, of course, that visit of the Bishop had been personal and unofficial only, though, of course, we added that his Lordship had freely discussed with Mar Shimun terms of possible inter communion, and we informed him of what those suggested terms had been. They were, as a matter of fact, essentially the same as those embodied in resolutions 63 and 64 of the Lambeth Conference, though we were, unfortunately, not aware of this at the time of our visit (August 12th). The Matran declared that he saw no difficulty in the mutual acceptance of such terms, and added, *proprio*

²⁹ Ibid., pp.188 -189.

³⁰ William Collins, Bishop of Gibraltar, visited Mar Benyamin Shimun Patriarch in November 1907. He met Archdeacon Abimalek (who was consecrated Metropolitan of India in December 1907), Rabban Deacon David (who was consecrated by name Bishop Mar Aprem in 1908). Bishop of Gibraltar writes about this Deacon that he strongly resembles the Dean of Eli (Dr. Kirkpatrick) in features, though not in gentleness of expression. William, Bishop of Gibraltar, *Notes of a Journey to Kurdistan in 1907*, Guildford, 1908, p.31.

motu, a statement which surprised as much as it delighted us, viz., that he had come to the conclusion that all personal anathemas ought to be dropped, as things in themselves “unworthy”. Such a statement as this from the most conservative of all Assyrian bishops, the man whom even the stiff-necked of Ashitha hold in honour, shows that the old narrow pride in their position which once distinguished Assyrians is breaking down.

The question of dropping the anathemas against Cyril of Alexandria which has been a part of the concern in the ecumenical discussions initiated by Pro-Oriente, Vienna in recent years was indeed a concern of Mar Isaac Khnanishu Metropolitan who died in 1918 A D. The above report of W.A. Wigram comments.³¹

It is specially significant when we remember that it was this very Mar Khnanishu who insisted on the special anathema on St. Cyril being read at Qudshanis, on the last occasion (now some fifteen years ago), when that section of a certain special service containing anathemas was not omitted, as is usually the case at that Church.

One point was brought forward by our host, which is worth mentioning, as showing what unexpected obstacles may occur in this land of the unforeseen. “You have the succession of Bishops”, he said, “but have you the succession of the leaven”?

Wigram comforts himself that this point of succession of holy leaven was not pressed by the Metropolitan or by anyone else. He concludes his comments on this point on an optimistic note.³²

When such a line is taken by the most conservative and timorous of Assyrians, may we not hope and pray that GOD in His providence will open the way to closer relations with the Church, particularly when, by His goodness, recent changes in Turkey have taken away

³¹ W. A. Wigram, *op. cit.*, p.189.

³² *Ibid.*, pp.189 -190.

most of the danger that the political suspicions of the Government might be roused by over-friendliness between its subjects and the undesired Foreigner?

On 30th January 1908 Sulte, the sister of Patriarch Mar Rewil Shimun passed away. She was a powerful figure being the “First Lady” of the Patriarchal Household. About her we read from the letter of W.H. Browne dated 4th April 1908.³³

The old lady had for forty years ruled her brother’s and lately her nephew’s household; for her mother died when she was quite a child and her elder sister only lived to her twentieth year. Hers was a life of rigid austerity and much labour, mental and physical; but, until broken by the death of her two brothers, seemed younger than her years; and her anxieties on account of the fortunes of her house, her people and her Church, and the continual grief caused by the ingratitude of her cousins for all her father’s and her own generosity, hardly, until recently, seemed to effect her strong constitution and cheerful disposition.

Sulte was some three or four years old when the Kurds of Butan and Hakkiare began, in 1842, the massacre of the Assyrians in the Zab valley; and she was found by Kurdish riflers of the corpses half buried under a heap of slain. More fortunate than her elder brother Jesse, she was not killed, but restored in exchange for a silk sash to mother Surma, who was nursing her baby Reuel, the future Catholicos. She was thus one of the little party for whom a faithful Syrian of a neighbouring village and a merciful Kurd made a way of escape from the Kurdish Mira’s camp behind Julamerk over the Persian frontier to Urmi; and was able to return some five years later to Qudshanis, when the Turkish Government had banished the Kurdish Miras.

When her sister Shamle died Sulte took her place to be later in 1908 to be occupied by Surma, the last “First Lady” of the Patriarchal household.

³³ Quoted from *Assyrian Mission Quarterly Paper*, No.72, July 1908, London, p.896.

About the situation of the Church in 1909, we get some idea from a letter published in the Assyrian Mission Quarterly Paper, dated January 1908. This report written by W.A. Wigram refers to the change in attitude of the Assyrians in Persia. Although Wigram witnesses no change as a result of “reform and revolution” among the Assyrians, he notes that the stir caused in men’s minds had naturally had its effect in the “Church Sphere”. He elaborates this point.³⁴

The story went round that there were five hundred camels in the bazaar at Tabriz, loaded with “Reform” consigned to Urmi, and that everybody was to have a share. Well, as a matter of fact, everybody has had a share of the reform spirit that was going, and it comes out, largely, in the feeling “Let us manage our church for ourselves”. Unfortunately, this desire to manage the Church does not imply the desire to pay for the Church; there is the same readiness as of old to accept European help, there is less of the old readiness to follow European counsels.

Thus we find in Urmi a very real revived “Nestorian” body, with real attachment to the old Church, and desire to be counted among its sons, an attachment that is not less real, in them, because leadership in a movement “back to the old Church” means that they will be “leaders of a dasta (party)”, though that prospect, so dear to the Syrian heart, probably moves them more than they are themselves aware.

The “inclination to return to the old Church, on the part of the ‘Syrian Evangelical Church’, which was formed on an independent basis under the influence of the American Presbyterian mission, about forty years ago. With this aim, the American missionaries in conjunction with the Anglican mission attempted to sketch out the lines of a concordat. It is interesting to know how ecumenical were these missionaries in the last century before the present ecumenical conversations began. They have relevance to the current ecumenical concerns of the Church. In the same report of Wigram we read;³⁵

³⁴ Ibid., January 1910, p.1003.

³⁵ Ibid., pp.1003 -1004.

The Evangelicals to enter the “Old Church” and to accept -

A. The use of the Church Services, provided that where a congregation desires it, the new Syriac, or vernacular, may be substituted for the classical language.

B. Episcopacy to be recognized as the form of Church government. Here, of course, the evangelicals do not disguise their preference for married Bishops, a feeling with which it is difficult for an Anglican to find fault. There may be difficulties with the Syrians, though it is worth observing that there is nothing in the Syrian Sunhadus against married bishops; a fifth century council passed a rule, expressly declaring that any clerk, even the Patriarch, might marry, and this rule has never been repealed, though centuries have passed since it was acted on, when the Sunhadus was compiled. A further proviso of the Americans, that Bishop ought to act as far as possible in Synod, is again of an eminently primitive character in itself, and so far most desirable.

C. Presbyterian ministers to be re-ordained episcopally, those who cannot submit to this, to be content with the role of preachers.

D. The Church’s round of feast and fast to be observed, provided that care be taken against certain superstitious uses.

In return, they ask: -

1. That the evangelical aim, i.e., the infusion of spiritual life and power into the Church, be admitted.
2. That the Protestant right to latitude of personal faith, and the right to work constitutionally within the Church for certain reforms that they deem desirable, be recognized.
3. That the returning body be received in a spirit of cordiality, and not of suspicion.

On September 26, 1910 (Festival of the Holy Cross according to Julian

calendar)³⁶ W.H. Browne who was missionary to the Assyrians for nearly quarter of a century (June 1886 – Sept. 1910) died of an accident³⁷ and was buried among the Assyrians to whom he dedicated his life. His services in serving Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun (1903 – 1918), Patriarch Mar Poulouse Shimun (1918 – 1920), Lady Surma, Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan of India (until his consecration in December 1907) cannot be underestimated. It is essential to place on record an estimate of this missionary written by one of his colleagues David Jenks at the time of his tragic death.³⁸

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that the epithets “Venerable” and “picturesque” adequately describe Browne. He was an active man, interpreting to the Syrians by his life the message of the Western Church, and exemplifying its conception of Christianity. Nor do I think that his life would be fitly portrayed by a thrilling picture of his isolation and its restrictions, his native food, his endurance of interruptions and purposeless visits. The word which seems to me most fitly to describe his life is devotion. He gave himself entirely to the people, and like anyone who gives himself in complete forgetfulness of self, he had much reward even in this life.

Rabbi Browne, as this bearded English priest was called had done great things in fostering friendship between the Anglican Church and the Assyrian Church during his tenure of his service until his last breath in September 1910. He had cultivated great friendship with Deacon Ishai,³⁹ half brother of the Patriarch Mar Rewil Shimun (d.1903). W.H. Browne enjoyed greater confidence with Mar Benyamin Shimun (Deacon Ishai’s son who ruled the Church since 1903) had earned his great respect among the Assyrians.

³⁶ Now the festival of the finding of the Holy Cross by Queen Helena is on 13 September every year, as there is a difference of 13 days between the Julian reckoning and the Gregorian reckoning. It is a fixed festival.

³⁷ He took an overdose of the homeopathic medicine by mistake.

³⁸ David Jenks., in *Kurds & Christians*, op.cit., p.203.

³⁹ Deacon Ishai, father of two future Patriarchs, Mar Benyamin (1903-1918) and Mar Poulouse (1918-1920), died in Urmi in Feb. 1895 AD.

Rabbi Browne was very courteous to Patriarch Mar Benyamin's mother Asiat, who was unhappily an invalid and who died on 19 Nov., 1910 and Sulti, Mar Benyamin's aunt who was the first lady of the Patriarchal household, whose duties were later taken over by Surma after Sulte's death in 1908.

If more like William Henry Browne were among the missionaries of the Archbishop the relationship between these two Churches would have been closer than what it is at present. It is a historical fact that after the death of W.H. Browne in 1910, the relationship between these two Churches gradually deteriorated and the First World War (1914 – 1918) caused the closure of the Assyrian mission of the Archbishop of Canterbury. At present, the relationship is minimal.

The testimony of the Assyrian Metropolitan about this English missionary should be reproduced here. Only a brief portion of the letter written by Mar Timotheus on November 22, 1910 from Trichur is quoted below.⁴⁰

The late Dr. Browne was beloved of all the nation without doubt; and this I say, not for the sake of saying it, but because I know nearly all our small nation. And who but will say that this came from his love? He truly loved those that loved him, and they returned his love with a true love; that is they knew and understood each other; and the cause of this will be clearly seen by all that wish to do so from his long stay in the Mission. And by this account I do not understand why his Grace the Archbishop and the Church of England who love the Syrians, do not make it more easy for his people to stay longer among us; that they may learn more about us and love us more, as did our dear friend.

The penultimate paragraph of the letter is worth quoting, because there are still many people not only in England or in Egypt (the land of Cyril of Alexandria) but also in other parts who look down upon the Assyrians as heretics. Mar Timotheus appreciates the contribution of Mr. Browne in this aspect.⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Assyrian Mission Quarterly Paper.*, No.72, January 1911, London, p.1073.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.1073 - 1074.

Dr. Browne in his quiet work did two great things; the greatest and most necessary, though not yet finished altogether, was the removal of that great black stone of offence in the minds of the English in regard to our Church, that it is heretical, which God forbid! for he had courage to declare that this was not true. And, as far as I know, I can say that he did all that lay in his power for us: and so he is worthy to be loved, and we must never forget him. Need not that I throw doubt on the distressfulness of our condition, so can I say that I rejoice that he died in our midst, in especial that he thought well of the faith of our Church. I doubt not that the Church of England can easily fill his place with another person and another name, but alas! How difficult for another leader to fill his place in the heart of the Syrians.

In 1910 Surma, sister of Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun, writes about his younger brother; “Hormizd has gone to Constantinople to read more Turkish by way of Tiflis with Mar Ephrem, we have no news of him for more than two months. We are very anxious about him”.⁴²

The same letter talks about the death of Patriarch’s mother Asiat.⁴³

We had another unexpected loss of our dear mother, who had been unwell for these two years but we thought she was getting on well this winter until November 19th; I went to her room in the morning and she told me she had not slept well through the night; yet she was talking of Mar Shimun’s arrival the same day from his journey of Jilu and Baz, but at half past two we were called from our duties to see her passing away peacefully to her Lord, without any pain. Mar Shimun arrived half an hour later. We know that she has entered into the joy of her Lord: she had been preparing these two years to meet her Lord.

⁴² Ibid., p.1071.

⁴³ Ibid.

Russia re-entered Tabriz in the spring of 1909. According to the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, Persia was a part of the influence of Russia. By 1910, eight battalions of infantry and a division of Cossacks were stationed at Tabriz, Urmiyah, Khoi, and Dilman. About the influence of the Russians, John Joseph observes,⁴⁴

In Urmiyah, the Russian consul was the supreme authority in most affairs and did not hesitate on occasion to exercise authority without mediation of the Persian officials. “A hint from him is more effectual than an order from the Persian Government”, wrote Shedd, “and the former is often the cause of the latter”. With the strengthening of Russia’s position, the Russian Church mission gained in prestige. Referring to the head of that mission, the American missionary wrote, “the impression here is that there is no one who does not stand in awe of the Archimandrite”.

The Protestants suffered much, as the Russians were Orthodox.⁴⁵

The “Evangelical Nestorians”, who had withstood proselytizing, were particularly victimized. When pleading and preaching failed to change them, their rivals resorted to persecution. In villages where the Protestants formed a minority, they were not allowed water to irrigate their fields, their pasturage was given to the village’s herds, and the landlords were encouraged to tax them heavily.

Around 1911 there were “Syrian Catholics” in Mosul. These are the Jacobites who joined the Catholic Church. This group was not placed under the Chaldean Patriarch Mar Emmanuel. Although Rev. Wigram calls it “a strange anomaly”, he clarifies,⁴⁶

Practically, there are very good reasons for the system and the rule; Nestorian and Jacobite have been enemies too long for them to forget that enmity in the mere fact of submission to the Pope, and the

⁴⁴ John Joseph., op. cit., p.128.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.129.

⁴⁶ W.A. Wigram., *Assyrian Mission Quarterly Paper*, No.83, April 1911, London, p. 1075.

mere suggestion that the “Syrian Catholics” ought to submit to Mar Emmanuel would probably send many of them, if not all, back to the Church of their fathers once more. So they are recognised, at all events for the time being, as separate Churches and separate *melets*, and form practically separate communions; there can, it seems, be two “Catholic” Bishops in one place, both recognised as such, and neither of them subordinate to the other, yet neither of them in schism.

The Anglican clergyman observes that this arrangement is “full of practical wisdom”. He rightly remarks, “Rome knows when to relax a rule, as well as when to enforce it”.⁴⁷

On May 3rd, 1911, Rev. W.A. Wigram of the Archbishop’s Assyrian Mission wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury from Amadia, Turkey in Asia (Vilayat of Mosul).⁴⁸

My dear Lord Archbishop,

I send you a letter to inform you that Mar Immanuel, “Chaldean” (i.e. Romanised Nestorian) Patriarch, is now leaving Mosul for Europe and England, and that it is his ambition to be received by King George, as was the Jacobite Patriarch by King Edward in 1909.

He desires this honour, because it would add greatly to his local prestige and power, particularly if used as he knows how to use it. For the same reason I don’t regard it as most desirable that he should receive it, and if your grace can put any hindrance in the way by representation of the facts of his career, I venture to hope that you will do so.

The British Consul in Mosul fully agrees with me in this matter.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 1075. The Patriarch of the Syrian Catholics now is Mar Moussa Davoud. In 1930 the equivalent of “Syrian Catholics” came into existence in India. It is known as Syro-Malankara Church. The head of the Church is Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselius of Trivandrum.

⁴⁸ Letter of W.A. Wigram to the Archbishop of Canterbury dated May 3, 1911, copied from Lambeth Palace Library, preserved in Trichur archives in CD ROM 144.

Mar Immanuel has been the constant opponent of all British Mission work, and indeed of British interests generally, in Mosul and its district, and he has particularly opposed the CMS and your Grace's Mission.

As regards the Nestorians, whom the English Missions specially attempt to assist, the hostility, which a Roman Catholic Prelate naturally feels to an independent Church, has led him into action of the most unscrupulous character. E.G.

1. Rashid, the Kurdish Chief, who recently destroyed seven Christian villages in Tiari, received a regular subsidy from his Mission funds.

2. In the case of "Chaldeans", who wish to return to their ancient Nestorian Church, and be registered as members of it, (their legal right) he has openly

A. Offered bribes to the men themselves, to prevent this action.

B. Bribes Mussalman officials to refuse this right to men who persisted.

C. Employed terrorism for the same purpose.

E.g. His agents have falsified registers, and sworn to false information, to secure that such "returnees" should be enrolled as soldiers, when long past the legal age.

D. It will be in the recollection of some officials at the Foreign Office, that in the month of January 1910, a mob attacked the house of the Dragoman of the British Consulate in Mosul, and threatened the life of a Nestorian Bishop there.⁴⁹ It was known that this mob was stirred up by the agents of the Patriarch, and that he endorsed its

⁴⁹ Reference is to Bishop Mar Elia of Alkosh who came under Patriarch Mar Emmanuel a decade later and died Chaldean around 1955.

action. Subsequently, he openly threatened the two English ladies, who assisted in sheltering his intended victim.

3. Mar Immanuel is the open ally of the most re-actionary and corrupt clique in Mosul.

Ofcourse, these facts suggest a prelate of the XVI th, rather than of the XX th century, and that is in fact the atmosphere in which we live here. I think that they are enough to prove that Mar Immanuel is not the sort of person to whom King George would wish to show special honour.

I have just heard, to my deep grief, of the departure of the Bp. of Gibraltar.

I remain your Grace,

your most obedient servant,

W.A.Wigram

His Grace, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury

At the time of the beginning of the First World War (1914 – 18) there was comparative calm among the Assyrians. The Russians encouraged divisions among the various Christian groups. They were very much against the “Evangelical Nestorians” who refused to come to the Russian Orthodox fold.

By the summer of 1912, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Mission began to realise that they could not satisfy the expectations of the Assyrians in supplying them their material needs. They expected money to pay the priests, to repair the Churches, to give them protection from the Kurds, to pressurise the Turkish government to do its duty to them etc. The head of the Archbishop’s Mission, Rev. MacGillivray wrote of his conversation he had

with the Assyrian Archdeacon to whom the Mission gives a small present.⁵⁰

“I replied that we had never made any such promises, that Mar Shimun had asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to send a mission to teach his people. There upon the Archdeacon, who, by the way, could not write his own name, and, although he could read the services, was entirely ignorant of Old Syriac, and therefore had no idea of the meaning of what he read, exclaimed, “Teaching! What teaching do we need? There were plenty of learned men in our nation before you English came. It is not teaching what we want, but money and protection from the Kurds”.

The general condition of the Evangelical Church was good. The evangelicals had good education through Urmia College and Fiske Seminary. They had a mission hospital. They had about 3,000 communicant members and an equal number of adherents.

3.6 The First World War

At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 AD most Assyrians were living in a large area between Mosul (Nineveh) in Iraq, Urmia in Iran and Van in Turkey including lake Van. This triangular area has 200 miles in each of these directions. Hakkari was an independent province in Turkey. The Turkish Government had kept the Assyrians in Hakkari as an Ashiret⁵¹ (tribal) and kept it under the rule of the Maliks (Chiefs).

The Russians being Christians had an eye on the Assyrians. In 1907 the Russians got Azerbaijan province. In 1908 the Turkish Revolution under Kamal Ataturk promised help to the minorities. But the Turks enforced Turkish into the Assyrian districts in Hakkari. In April 30, 1909 the Russians entered Azerbaijan.

⁵⁰ J.F. Coakley., *The Church Of The East And The Church Of England*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, p.322.

⁵¹ The word *Ashiret* comes from the Arabic word *Ashra* that means ten.

Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun met the Russian officials in Iran in 1910 expecting help from them. On August 3, 1914 the Patriarch was asked to meet Tahsin Pasha, the Vali (governor) of Van. The Turks wanted the Assyrians to protect the eastern and southern borders of Turkey.

On Oct. 30, 1914 Russia declared war on Turkey. The Assyrians helped the Russians in two battles on November 1 - December 3, 1914 and on December 4, 1914 – January 18, 1915. The Muslims of Bashkala butchered 50 Assyrians of Gawar. Similar crimes were committed against the Assyrians in Noduz, Albaq, Iyel, and Mar Bisho.

On December 30, 1914 orders were given to the Russian army to withdraw from Urmia. Immediately the Assyrian villages were attacked. On the night of January 2 and 3, 1915, more than 25,000 Assyrians fled with the Russian army. The following days witnessed many atrocities against the Assyrians.

In mid-December 1914, Russians made an ill-fated offensive at Sarikanish. By the end of December, Russian troops were forced to withdraw from the area.

On 2nd January 1915 the Russians began to move out and two days later the Turks entered the town. After the Russian retreat the Kurds appeared around Lake Urumiyah, the chief of them was Ismail Agha Simkho, a former Russian ally.⁵²

About the pathetic situation of the time, John Joseph describes.⁵³

Panic-stricken, about ten thousand Nestorians fled northward that winter in the wake of the retreating Russian army. The remainder left their villages behind and took refuge at the various missions. About 3,000 were in the French Catholic Mission and not less than 17,000 found shelter in the premises of the American Mission; a

⁵² Simkho Agha was the Kurd who killed Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun in March 1918.

⁵³ John Joseph., *op. cit.*, pp. 132 - 133.

few others found refuge in homes of Muslim friends and neighbours. But it was the score of the American missionaries here who performed one of the most heroic achievements of the war. They proved to be real saviors of the Christian Persians and during the long war years fed thousands of starving Kurds and Persian Muslims from their meager stores. These missionaries had always stood for beneficent service but it was during that war that they won the affection and respect of all, and among the Nestorians this feeling became deep and lasting.

Dr. William A Shedd born in Urmiah was the son of an American missionary. This medical doctor did great service to the refugees. About his service John Joseph writes:⁵⁴

He was aided by his co-workers, while the American Consuls at Tabriz and Tiflis, the Ambassador at Constantinople, and the Department of State in Washington did all they could help. President Wilson, who did not declare war on Turkey partly because of his friendship with the missionaries there, sent a special demand to the Turkish government that American interests in Urmiah not be endangered. At the same time the missionaries depended a great deal on the good will and protection of the leading Urmiah Muslims and a few Kurdish chiefs whom they had befriended by medical and relief services among them.

On January 24, 1915 the Turkish governor of Julamerk province (Hakkari mountains) and the Turkish Consul Rajib Beg, arrived in Urmia with 1500 Kurds accompanied by two German spies Naiman and Homel. Their arrival initiated new chapter of massacres against the Assyrians in Urmia.

At the beginning of the First World War Russia was all over Azerbaijan, Tabriz etc. The Caucasian front was a secondary theatre of war to Russia. But to the Turks it was area of major interest.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.133

On Feb. 24, 1915, Paul Shimun writes from Tiflis to Rev. F.N. Heazell, which tells the sad saga of the Assyrians to the posterity.⁵⁵

For the past two years or more the whole population of the Urmi Plain, both Christian and Moslem, has enjoyed a period of unusual prosperity. The Russian soldiers have guarded the roads, so that travelling became easy, and have in a large measure restrained the Kurds from raiding Syrian villages. The Russians have kept a body of some 5,000 troupes in Persia, and have repeatedly given assurance to the people there that they would not be withdrawn from the country. Recently a message had reached Urmi from the Tsar saying that the Christians of Urmi were to be protected at all costs. Rifles were served out to the men of Syrian villages where the people had volunteered to defend themselves against sudden attacks of the Kurds until the Russian troops could come to their aid. Telephone communication had been established between all outlying districts and Urmi, so that the Russian commander could be kept in touch with the movements of the enemy. During the month of December we got many scares, for some Russians removed their families from Urmi, and we began to wonder if it would be safe to stay. Later on, to establish confidence, orders were given that no one was to leave the country. From this time our troubles began.

Before their first victory over the Turks in the Caucasus, the Russians, fearing that their communications in Azerbaijan might be cut, ordered a general withdrawal of troops from Northwest Persia, which meant that Urmi, Khoi, Salmas and Tabriz were to be left unprotected. Of this withdrawal, the Syrians were kept in ignorance until almost the last hour, on the ground that the flight of a number of people would impede the troops.

Two-thirds of the people of Urmi knew nothing of the Russian withdrawal until they actually saw the troops on the road; by that time, the Turks and Kurds were rapidly approaching the city and held all

⁵⁵ *Assyrian Mission Quarterly Paper*, No.99, April 1915, pp.1327 - 1328.

the roads. The villages round Urmi were full of refugees from the Turkish frontier, and when they saw the Russians leaving Urmi, they fled precipitately to Tiflis. It was a sad sight. Men, women, and children to the number of 15,000 set out on foot without even bread for their journey. The sufferings of these people on the road to Tiflis were pitiable in the extreme, for they had a seven days' journey to make.

This long letter which tells the pathetic story of the affairs of the Assyrians after the beginning of the First World War (1914 – 18) tells us what had happened in Gugtapeh, five miles from Urmi in Persia.⁵⁶

On January 2nd the Kurds began to invest the large village of Gugtapeh, situated some five miles from Urmi, to this village many had fled for refuge, as it was thought it could be defended by its well-armed inhabitants. As the Kurds came on, they burnt villages in all directions, one of the first to be destroyed being Dizateka. Gugtapeh was surrounded, and the fighting continued for two days. The Kurds attacked the village in front, and the Muslims from Urmi came to their help in the rear. The villagers then had to give up the fight, and the Kurds entered and burnt house, Churches, as well as fuel and hay crops of last year. The young men were killed and the women carried as captives. The two villages of Gulpashan and Charagushi were spared on condition that they would pay a large sum of money and receive a Kurd as their village master.

Ten days ago a small body of men arrived here (Tiflis) from Urmi. They told us what had happened at Abdilakendi.⁵⁷ This village, which close to Lake Urmi, was entered by the Kurds, who carried off all the inhabitants to the neighbouring Moslem village of Marangalovi. Here they were taken to the Mosque and told they must become Moslems. The Syrian priest, Kasha Mushi, refused to

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp.1328 - 1329.

⁵⁷ The Church in Abdilakndi is still there with its tragic memories of the First World War. The present writer visited that Church in March 1998.

enter the Mosque, saying at his time of life he would not change his religion. The Kurds threatened to kill him if he would not comply. He asked for a few minutes to say his last prayers, and while praying was shot with two bullets and stabbed twelve times. His body remained in the street for three days. His wife, who was inside the mosque and knew what had taken place, dared not leave to bury her husband. Four days later these people were allowed to return to their village. They found nearly everything had been destroyed. The whole number escaped that night to Kashkisarai, a village 15 miles from Marand, where the Russian troops had halted. Here they were again forced to become Moslems. They were taken to the bath and "purified"; their Christian names were changed to Musa, Esa, Hasan, and the like; after they were kept 15 days and were made to receive lessons in their new religion. The women had their locks cut short, and all were taught Moslem prayers. (The men were not circumcised as the weather was too cold). Two of the party escaped to the Russian commander and were sent by him to Julfa.

These few facts show the grim reality of the situation.

The above letter explains that there were 800 Turks and 2500 Kurds in Urmi. The rumour at that time was that 15,000 Turks were awaiting Russian advance in Salmas. Paul Shimun says that the Russian army was again in Tabriz. But their return to Salmas and Urmi was not certain. Thus the plain of the Urmi whom the writer calls a veritable Paradise was ruined by the efforts of Turks, Kurds and Persian Moslems. The Assyrian refugees from Urmi telegraphed to the Archbishop of Canterbury to appeal to the English nation to help them. The letter concludes,⁵⁸

Let the English nation judge whether there is any people under the sun, not excepting the brave Belgians, who have suffered the same amount of horrors and cruelty as these people have suffered. The Syrian women have suffered outrage and torture; the homes of all have reduced to ashes; the fields and vineyards destroyed; the Churches that have not been burnt have been disgracefully polluted. The outlook for the next few years is the gloomiest we have ever

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.1330.

known since the invasion of Tamerlane the Tartar. God grant that we may never again return to the rule of a Moslem Power.

We appeal to the civilized world, we, who have never lived under a Christian Government, to help this remnant of an ancient race, to see to it that our homes be restored to us, and that we be allowed to practice our religion without interference on the part of the unspeakable Turk or of his barbarous and wicked ally, the Kaiser. Give liberty to us, who, as a nation, have lived for centuries under the fearful scourge of Moslem misrule.

Bishop Mar Dinkha⁵⁹ was shot dead in February 1915 in the village of Gulpashan⁶⁰ along with 60 men. The Assyrians of Urmia would have been annihilated if the Assyrian tribesmen from Hakkari had not arrived there in time.

In May 1915 an important tragic event took place among the Assyrians. Nimrod, cousin of Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun (1903-1918) was murdered along with his two sons, Shallitha and Yuav and his brother Absalom's two sons, Dinha and Daryawesh. Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun has been often blamed for the massacre of his father's brother Ishaq Shimun's son, Nimrod. Malek Yakob Ishmael (d.1974) states in his book on the Assyrian history about the sad episode.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Mar Dinkha was a bishop of Nochea and was transferred by the Patriarch Mar Banyamin Shimun to Soldoz in 1914. He was captured with others and was shot dead in 1915.

⁶⁰ It is said that he was shot in the village of Charbash on the mountain of the Jews behind the Church of Mar Quriakos. He was the 17th bishop of Mar Dinkha family.

⁶¹ On August 15, 1957 Malik Yacob Ishmael met Qasha Elias de Baz who was one of those who plundered the sheep of the Kurds. Nimrod along with his sons Shallitha and Yuav as well as Dinha and Daryavesh (Sons of Awsalom) were killed. Others killed were Henado and Darmo from Kochanes and Yonathan and Shamuël from Mar Bisho. They were killed by Assyrian tribes, without informing anybody in May 1915 in Kochanes. Qasha Elias answered to Malik Yacob, "I was not a leader. They asked my opinion. We were in Deesan. We (150 men) were asked to plunder the sheep of Kurds, one-day distance from Kochanes. When we came back victoriously after the plunder this episode of killing of Nimrod and others took place. We went back to Deesan. I was a deacon for Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun. As I approached and saw the door where Patriarch was staying I heard Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun (d.1918) telling in anger blaming Pithyon Gulazar de Baz: "Why did you shed the blood of the righteous? I just told you to bring them here to make reconciliation." Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun was innocent from all the blame that is put on the Patriarch. Qasha Elias de Baz said that he had heard it from the mouth of the Patriarch himself.

On 10th August 1915 Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun held a council of his “notables” to decide the strategy for defence against the Kurds. At that time Haider Beg, the vali of Mosul, sent a letter to the Patriarch. He stated: “Hormizd, your brother, is in my hands, if you do not order your people to lay down their arms, your brother will be put to death.”⁶²

The answer of the Patriarch was as follows:⁶³ “My people are my sons, and they are many, Hormizd my brother is but one. Let him therefore give his life for the nation.” In 1915 the Patriarch’s house in Kochanes was burnt together with many other houses including the English Mission House. Turkish artillery was brought against these Assyrians. Tiari and Tkhuma districts were destroyed. In August 1915 about 35,000 mountaineers fled to Salmas, Persia. The Patriarch’s youngest brother Ishaya died of fever.⁶⁴ The Patriarch had to rush through the burial service and flee just before the enemies reached the place

By the end of 1915, Kurdistan became a deserted place, as the Assyrians had to flee for their lives. But Kurds in Bashqala began to persecute the Assyrian Christians. We read in John Joseph’s book cited above.⁶⁵

The Turkish government tried to secure the Patriarch’s loyalty, just as it had solicited the help of the Armenians, but in vain. Members of Mar Shimun’s family who urged a more conciliatory policy toward the Turks were killed in cold blood. Under the leadership of their Patriarch the tribes fled under very difficult circumstances to seek refuge within the Russian lines in Salmas and Urmiyah. In the following few months about a third of them perished from mere lack of food, clothing, and shelter.

⁶² Surma Dbait Mar Shimun, *Assyrian Church Customs And The Murder Of Mar Shimun*, 2nd Edition, USA, 1983, p.72.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp.72 - 73.

⁶⁴ Ishaya was the youngest brother of Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun. He was about 20 years old in 1915, being born in 1895.

⁶⁵ John Joseph., *op. cit.*, pp.134 - 135.

In the beginning of 1916, Turkey was no longer strong enough to protect their boundaries. The Russian army in Caucasus was strengthened, and Russia used it to fulfil their age-old dream of wresting the control of Constantinople.

In the spring of 1916 the allied government decided on their territorial acquisitions in Asiatic Turkey. On the result of the negotiations in London and Petrograd we read further.⁶⁶

According to the agreement Russia would obtain the provinces of Erzerum, Trabizond, Van, Bitlis, as well as territory in the southern part of Kurdistan, along the line of Mush-Sert-Jazirat Ibn Umar-Amadiyah-Persian frontier. The Azerbaijan contingent was strengthened and a new expeditionary force was sent under General Baratoff for the protection of Persia against a Turko-German invasion. The Russians helped the Nestorian refugees from Hakkari and urged them to join up with them. Under the leadership of one of their own leaders, Agha Patrus, they rendered invaluable service as advance guards and scouts to the Russians.

In the winter of 1916 the Russians had initial success. Erzerum fell into Russians. They advanced to capture Trabizond, the only Turkish seaport in eastern Anatolia and Caucasus. About this victory of the Russians we read.⁶⁷

With these victories the whole of the Van region came into Russian hands and the Turks were cut off from their forces across the frontier and south of lake Urmiah. Baratoff's forces in Persia were able to take the towns of Hamadan and Sultanabad and by the end of February reached Kermanshah. While the northern forces captured Trabizond, Baratoff reached the Iraqi border at Khanaqin. For a while there had been a possibility of a Russian advance on Baghdad through Rawanduz, which the Russian forces had occupied in May 1916.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.135.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 136.

But the Russian advances were stopped by the counter attacks of Ihsan Pasha. Moreover, the people had hated Russians for the terrible atrocities they had committed on the Muslim people in and around Rowanduz. Only 20% of the Kurdish population survived.

In the winter of 1917, the Russian forces were re-organising for further advance. But in March 1917 the Russian revolution broke out. We read:⁶⁸

That summer the Kerensky government ordered Baratoff to withdraw all Russian forces from Persian soil. By the end of October there was military anarchy throughout Caucasus army. In December the Turks and Russians entered into negotiations, which resulted in the agreement of Brest-Litovsk. The agreement stipulated that starting from the principle of the freedom, independence, and territorial inviolability of the neutral Persian Empire, the Turkish and Russian High Commands were both prepared to withdraw their troops from Persia.

By January 1918, Dr. William Shedd became U.S. Vice Consul in Urmiyah. We read about the sad situation in the above book.⁶⁹

In the summer of 1917 the troops, angered by the inevitable depreciation of the ruble, which reduced purchasing power of their pay to one-fourth of its former value, burned the bazaars of the town of Urmiyah, thereby inflicting an incalculable loss on the already much-afflicted city. "The most troublesome source of trouble", wrote Shedd, "is the Russian army. They are a menace to the community". Under these circumstances, the heads of the various missions, together with the leaders of the Christian community, tried to work out plans to secure order. Again the leader during these difficult days was Shedd. In January 1918 he was officially appointed Honorary United Vice Consul in Urmiyah, a post that he reluctantly accepted in the hope that official status might strengthen his posi-

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 137.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 139.

tion in his efforts to save the Christian community from utter destruction.

When the Russian army retreated, they left behind huge lots of arms and ammunition. Christians got these arms freely.

The allied forces were worried whether the Assyrians would use these arms and ammunitions, without proper control. Hence, the allied forces sent officers including English and French to Tiflis to instruct and perhaps restrict the Assyrian troops. Captain Gracey, a staff Intelligence Officer attached to the British Military Mission in Caucasus, went in aeroplane and promised help to the Assyrians, after the war was over, if they would help the British.

On February 22, 1918, the Persians attacked the Christian quarter in Urmiah. In March 1918, Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun along with 48 of his escorts was shot dead by Simko Agha. About the situation that follows John Joseph writes:⁷⁰

The region was in a state of anarchy once more. Simko, who had orders from the Governor of Tabriz to do away with Mar Shamun, had invited the latter for a friendly conference. He received him cordially, and kissed him when leaving; then the Patriarch and his men were pierced with bullets, custom common in the treacherous annals of the East. The Hakkaris took their revenge on the Muslim population of Dilman and most of the village of Salmas. Simko and his men had escaped to Khoi where they took part in the massacre of the Christians there. During this period Christian brigands terrorized Christians as well as Muslims but especially the latter. A missionary described this period as a region of terror for Muslims hard to imagine. Men of good will on both sides tried earnestly and constantly, but to very little purpose, to check lawlessness, made worse by famine conditions.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp.140 - 141.

Soon after the assassination of Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun the Assyrians came to take revenge on Simko Agha. Anticipating retaliation, Simkho had escaped. The fall of the Van city took place soon after. About 20,000 Armenians became refugees in Salmas. The Armenian refugees were pursued by the Turkish forces under Nuri Pasha who was on his way to Caucasus.

In Urmiyah by May 1918 L.C. Dunsterville, the British Officer began to occupy northern Persia. On 8th July he sent message to the Assyrians by plane asking the Assyrian and Armenian forces to join British troops within a fortnight at Sayyin Qalah.

Unfortunately when the British forces reached Sayyin Qalah the Assyrians had not reached there. Hence the British troops retired to Bijah. About what followed John Joseph summarises the situation in the following words.⁷¹

The Nestorians delayed by preparations and fighting on the way, followed the British and received the long-awaited help. But Agha Patrus, who commanded this expedition, had taken the main portion of his fighting force with him: when he and his men delayed on their return, wild rumors were spread in Urmiyah that they were all slaughtered. The small force that remained in Urmiyah could not hold back the enemy. Thus the whole population, with their cattle and belongings, poured southward in appalling confusion to join the British, with the Turks and Kurds on their heels, the former infuriated by their delay in Persia.

Thousands of the Assyrians suffered. They were transported to Iraq owing to the famine in Persia. Some would describe this tragedy of the Assyrians as the British betrayal. Others would ascribe it to some of the internal intrigues of the Assyrians such as whether David d Mar Shimun, brother of the Patriarch, or Agha Petros de Baz should be the real commander of the Assyrian forces.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 144.

Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun had consecrated four bishops in his period of 15 years.

Mar Yelda Yawalaha of Dure, Berwar in 1907

Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan for India on 15th Dec 1907

Mar Aprim (Shamasha David of Tkhuma) in 1908

Mar Elia episcopa of Alkosh, a Chaldean priest in 1909

Mar Benyamin could not consecrate more bishops. In 1914 during his Patriarchate Yosip Khananeesho was consecrated episcopa. But that consecration was done by Mar Isaaq Khananisho Metropolitan who was the consecrator of the Patriarch himself. But five years later when Mar Yosip Khananeesho was raised as the Metropolitan upon the death of his uncle, the consecration was done by Mar Poulouse Shimun Patriarch. That was the only episcopal consecration performed by that younger brother of Mar Benyamin Patriarch during his patriarchate of two years.

3.7 The Chaldean Catholics

Patriarch Joseph Audo's controversial administration was followed by a stable one by Mar Elias XII Abool Yonan (1878 – 1894). During this time, Hudra (the Chaldean Breviary) was published edited by Paul Bedjan, without mentioning his name. Assyrians were drawn to Chaldean Church. Elia Johannan Mellus Metropolitan of India during 1874 – 82 returned to Mesopotamia and worked in obedience to this Patriarch.

Patriarch Mar Elias XII Abol Yonan died in 1894 and was succeeded by Abdishu V. Khayyat who died 5 years later.

In 1900, an able Patriarch was elected. This Patriarch Mar Yousif Emmanuel II ruled for 47 years until his death in 1947. Pope Leo XIII made him Legate to the Nestorians (*Delegatus ad Nestorians*). In 1904, two Assyrian bishops (Berwar and Hakkari) and the whole of their congregations adopted the Catholic faith. The same writer observes.⁷²

⁷² Subhi, Zora., *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 247, Ponti. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, Rome, 1994.

Under this authority the Churches flourished greatly in number and quality and many of the learned bishops of the Church produced excellent works which contributed to the understanding of the previous centuries of the Church's age. Men like Adhai Scher, Bishop of Seert, Thomas Audo, Bishop of Urmia, Eugene Manna, Bishop of Basra, Bedjan the Lazarist and many others have left a rich collection of works in Syriac and other languages which have contributed a lot to the revival of Syriac literature.

**PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY 1918 – 1933
FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE REIGN
OF PATRIARCH MAR POULOSE
SHIMUN TILL THE MASSACRE OF THE
ASSYRIANS AT SIMALE,
NORTHERN IRAQ**

CHAPTER IV

4.1 The Patriarch Mar Poulouse Shimun (1918 - 1920)

Poulouse, younger brother of the murdered Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun, was the obvious choice to be the Patriarch. The murdered Patriarch's nephews were young, namely Theodore aged 12 and Eshai aged 10. Therefore, Poulouse was asked to take up the responsibility in that tragic period. He was never prepared for it as his brother, Patriarch Mar Benyamin was a young man. Perhaps Benyamin was the first Assyrian Patriarch to be murdered after Mar Shimun bar Sabbae in the 4th century.

Isaac Khananisho Metropolitan, who had consecrated Mar Benyamin Shimun on 12th April 1903 as Patriarch, had to do a similar job in 1918. There was one major difference. In 1903 two weeks prior to the death of Patriarch Mar Rewil Shimun, he had consecrated his own nephew Benyamin as Metropolitan on 15 March, 1903 and named this young Metropolitan the Patriarch-Designate. But in 1918 Poulouse was not groomed to succeed Mar Benyamin as Patriarch. Nevertheless, there was no time to call a Synod or to consult Mar Timotheus Metropolitan in India who was nearly 40 years old and had completed eleven years as Metropolitan in India.

In February 1919, Mar Timotheus decided to turn his attention from India to his people in Iraq. He decided to go to Iraq. It was his first visit outside India since he took charge in India in February 1908. Although he was going to the Middle East to champion their cause, the Assyrians were not in a position to pay for his travel. The Indian Church, which was already moving towards bankruptcy, collected money to send the Metropolitan and Deacon N.I. Ignatius to the Middle East.

After the treacherous murder of the Patriarch, Mar Benjamin Shimun in March 1918 AD Poulouse Shimun, brother of the murdered Patriarch, was consecrated without delay. But his young man was not healthy. Moreover, his people were fleeing for life from Turkey to Baquba near Baghdad. The

Assyrians lacked leadership. Hence, Mar Timotheus had to leave Trichur in February 1919 in the midst of the Trichur church litigation to go to Mesopotamia. Mar Timotheus tried to help his people.

Much about his visit has not been recorded. Since this was the shortest of his four foreign trips, he could not accomplish much more than attending to the problems of the Assyrian refugees who had already fled from their homeland in Turkey. He was able to meet his brother Zachariah Kellaitha and another brother David Kelaita who died in 1919 in the refugee camp. Zachariah had lost some of his children in that war.¹ Many Assyrians died during their flight to the refugee camp at Baquba.

The new Patriarch, Mar Poulouse Shimun XX, was very sick. Lady Surma, the elder sister of the Patriarch was giving leadership. Another brother David de Mar Shimun functioned as the commander of the Assyrian forces. Moreover, owing to the lawsuit in the Additional District Court at Trichur, Mar Timotheus had to rush back to Trichur. Thus after a stay of about four months he returned to Trichur on June 12, 1919.

He took with him Deacon Joseph de Kelaita, one of the greatest Syriac scholars of the present century to Trichur, to prepare Syriac types for starting a Printing Press in Mesopotamia. Deacon Joseph de Kelaita was a cousin of Mar Timotheus. This deacon was in London for printing the Old Testament in Syriac under the auspices of the Bible Society.² We come across this Deacon later in 1927 at Mosul when Mar Timotheus ordained him a priest. Deacon Kelaita stayed at Trichur for two years since 1919 and prepared the mould of the Syriac types. In 1921, he returned to Mosul and founded the Assyrian School and Press. He published the Syriac Liturgy

¹ Elishwa, daughter of Deacon Zachariah Kellaitha, was married to Zaya, the brother of Patriarch Mar Poulouse Shimun. The present writer visited Elishwa in her home in San Francisco in 1967. She was a widow as her husband Zaya de beth Mar Shimun had passed away in 1947.

² The Old Testament in Syriac was printed in London in 1913 by the Trinitarian Bible Society. Some titles in this Syriac Bible were in the handwriting of Joseph Kelaita. This Syriac Bible did not include the apocryphal books. Although the Church of the East approves the apocryphal books in the Holy Bible like the Catholics, this Bible did not include it because the Anglicans and other Protestants managed the Trinitarian Bible Society.

and several other books from his Assyrian Press at Mosul.

Another boy named Josiah also accompanied Mar Timotheus when he returned to Trichur in June 1919. But this boy returned to Mesopotamia after six months. He went again to Mesopotamia, accompanied by Fr. N.I. Ignatius.³

In 1919 the British were taking care of the Assyrians as refugees in Baquba Camp near Baghdad. But that temporary settlement was not enough for the Assyrians who had already suffered much. Therefore some Assyrians under the leadership of Malik Kambar d Malik Benyamin d Malik Warda of Jelu established a Jezirah district in Syria, which was under the French Government. The British Government didn't support this plan of the French Government. Therefore this "Assyrian Nation" fell after three years.

Malik Kambar was a young man of 29 years of age when he established the Assyrian protectorate in Hassake, northeastern Syria, at present headquarters of the bishop of Syria, Mar Aprem Athniel. This young hero moved his activities to Lebanon. During the World War II (1939-45) he served as a general under Emperor Haillie Selassie of Ethiopia. He fought against the Italian forces of Mussolini.

Agha Petros of Baz tribe made an attempt to establish an Assyrian Protectorate in Iraq in somewhat the same fashion as Malik Kambar of the Jelu tribe did across the border in Syria. Unfortunately Agha Petros developed difference of opinion with Lady Surma, sister of Patriarchs Mar Benyamin Shimun and Patriarch Mar Poulouse Shimun.⁴ The English government be-

³ N.I Ignatius was made a Priest on 6 June 1920 along with Revds. Antony Chitalan and Antony Chackola and four deacons (C.J. Chacko, M.P. Francis, N.I. Joseph and P.V. Jacob) and two sub deacons (P.L. Francis and M.L. Francis). There were only two priests at that time namely Rev. Chembil Thoma and Poulouse Konikara. Mar Timotheus made sure that the services at two churches in Trichur and Pattikad would not be cancelled as he was going to Iraq for a long and tedious journey.

⁴ The records do not show why Agha Petros turned against the Mar Shimun Family. The only explanation that is available is that Petros was asked to wait until the return of Lady Surma from England as well as the return of the Patriarch (Mar Poulouse Shimun) from the monastery of Mar Mattai near Mosul where the Patriarch was taking rest during his illness. Agha Petros refused to accept this advice thereby causing enmity to the leadership of the Church.

gan to doubt the intentions of Agha Petros. Finally Agha Petros severed his contact with the British and spent his last days in France. He was decorated by the French Government.

4.2 The Consecration of the Patriarch Mar Ishai Shimun in 1920

When Mar Timotheus Metropolitan of India heard that Eshai, a boy of 12 years of age, was going to be made Patriarch by his maternal uncle, Mar Yosip Khananisho Metropolitan of Rustaqa, Mar Timotheus got angry on hearing the news because he was not consulted about this consecration, although he was much senior to Mar Yosip Khananisho both in age and in seniority of consecration.⁵ He wrote a protest letter, which in part reads as follows:⁶

We all together, my weak self, Timotheus Metropolitan of Malabar and India and we, all the humble priests of the Church of the East in India after prayers and beseechings over the matter discussed and examined it in all justice and truth and without any evil motive, we realised that if the church affairs are to be thus administered, especially in the cause of the election and consecration of Mar Patriarch, the church concerned will be extinct as if it had not existed at all.

It is not far from the consequence of such a procedure. Because of this we, by the help of God which we have requested and prayed for, decided that we, the children of the Apostolic Church of the East in India, too have a right to share and associate in the election and consecration of the Patriarch. For, at present there are no diffi-

⁵ Mar Timotheus was born on 28 August 1878 and he was consecrated Metropolitan on 13 December 1907. Mar Yosip Khananeesho was born in 1893 and was consecrated Metropolitan in 1918.

⁶ This letter dated June 2, 1920 was signed by Mar Timotheus and attested by all five clergy of the Indian Church. A signed copy of this letter is preserved in the Archives at the Metropolitan Palace in Trichur. An English translation made by Mar Thoma Darmo is found as Appendix A of the Church of the East and Hereditary Succession, Mar Narsai Press, 1963.

culties on the way as there had been in the past centuries and it is very easy and near now. Moreover, they themselves (Mar Yousip) have requested our help and association with them.

In this letter Mar Timotheus gives also a firm warning that the Indian Church would not accept if this twelve-year-old boy were consecrated as the Patriarch.⁷

So we saw and assert that India, too has a claim in all truth and Justice to take part and associate in the election and the consecration of Mar Patriarch. Because of this, we decided and confirmed that it is neither fair, nor true, nor just nor canonical that this affair should be transacted by the said Mar Yosip Khananeesho alone, excluding all the other Prelates. If this Esai, quite a simple child, is made Patriarch; we never will accept him as such until and unless it has convinced us and we understand that he is made Patriarch according to the canons and customs of our Church at present and that he is accepted by all our congregation and nation in general.

On July 29th 1920, Mar Timotheus wrote another lengthy letter addressed to Mar Yoseph Khananishu in Syriac.⁸ The following excerpts of that letter in English translation give a clue to the attitude of Mar Timotheus against the consecration of a young boy as Patriarch.⁹

Oh! woe is me. Double woe to all those who are like me as I have attained some knowledge. Meanwhile I have need to get more without any doubt. Yet still I dare to teach those who are more familiar with the divine Scriptures. But for the rank and profession of our group I am prepared by the Grace of which are worthy.

⁷ "A Protest", *Church of the East and Hereditary Succession*, Mar Narsai Press, Trichur, p.53.

⁸ Letter Dated July 29, 1920, kept in the Archives in Trichur.

⁹ *Church of the East and Hereditary Succession*, op. cit., p.35 - 36. This boy was consecrated to the rank of the Patriarch before Mar Timotheus reached Baghdad. The consecration took place on June 20, 1920 at Baghdad.

4.3 The Visit Of Mar Timotheus To Iraq In 1920 - 1921

The second foreign trip Mar Timotheus made in July 1920, to Baghdad, was not a happy one, because the boy Eshai Shimun had already been consecrated Patriarch by his maternal uncle Mar Yousip Khananeesho, before the arrival of Mar Timotheus. A large group including Malik Khoshaba of Tiari tribe, joined with Mar Timotheus in protesting against Eshai Shimun and his consecrator and uncle Mar Yousip Khananeesho. For the sake of compromise, Mar Timotheus was made the Regent to the Patriarch. Hence, a temporary truce was made.

In October 1920, Mar Timotheus was made the Regent to the Patriarch. The document of this election was signed not only by two bishops (Mar Zaya Sargis of Jelu and Mar Elia) and one Metropolitan (Mar Yosep Khananeesho) but also by the father of the Patriarch, David as well as David's brother (Zaia) and sister (Surma).¹⁰

During the second trip of 1920-1921 Mar Timotheus spent his time in Baghdad and Mosul. In Baghdad, he stayed at the Hotel Mavde. During his stay in Iraq, he had the difficult task of representing the Church as the Regent of the boy-Patriarch. He approached the Director of Repatriation several times for the Assyrian refugees in camps. His letters reveal a variety of problems he had to face. The following letter is a sample.¹¹

Qasha (priest) Yokhannan of Bass of the 15th section of the refugee camp leaving his wife Asmar aside was unlawfully keeping another woman. He was ordered by Headquarters to take his wife, and go out of the Mindan Camp and come down to Mosul. Soon after he reached Mosul he left his wife again and was wandering here for the last about three months. All this time his wife was trying through His Lordship Mar Sarghese to reunite her husband, but a few days back he secretly went to Mindan, took other woman and gone away somewhere. His wife reports to me that she is in troubles since there

¹⁰ Syriac document in the Archives, Metropolitan's Palace, Trichur.

¹¹ Letters of Mar Timotheus, Archives, Metropolitan's Palace, Trichur.

is no one to support her here and requests to apply you to be kind enough to issue a pass allowing her to go to her brother in Mindan and receive rations there.

Mar Timotheus had several such problems to deal with. He had to ask for special tent and special rations for the members of the patriarchal family or bishops wherever they were visiting the refugee camps.

On March 7th, 1921, several leaders of the Assyrians, under the leadership of Malik Warda, sent a petition to Mar Timotheus, Mar Khananishu and David, father of the patriarch, stating that they would desert the camp if proper rations were not granted immediately. The ration they were receiving was “daily two annas a man, one and a half annas a woman and one anna a boy”. But the political officer told them that it would be reduced to one third. The petition pleaded for a remedy.¹²

Now we, the leaders beseech you to find out a remedy for the nation, otherwise they (people) say that we will leave these things the government has given to us and scatter. We the leaders hereafter cannot be responsible for the nation.

While Mar Timotheus was in Mosul in February 1921, Lady Surma, aunt of the Patriarch who was looking after the affairs of the patriarchal household, as the Patriarch was only 13, fell ill. In a letter dated February 18, 1921 Mar Timotheus writes to Mr. Garbett.¹³

In my note, I had mentioned about Lady Surma’s illness that the crisis was passed and she was coming round little by little. Indeed, it was so, but I am most grieved to inform you that in last week, she had a relapse and her case became very critical. Even now, the danger is not passed and in God is our only hope.

On account of her illness, Mar Timotheus was not able to go to Baghdad to

¹² Petition signed by Malik Warda, March 7, 1921.

¹³ Letter to Mr. Garbett, Feb. 18, 1921, Archives, Trichur.

meet the Assyrian representatives in Hamadan. On March 2nd, 1921, Mar Timotheus sent a telegram to them asking them to meet him in Mosul instead of in Baghdad.

While returning from Baghdad to Mosul in February 1921 Mar Timotheus lost his leather bag containing many valuable papers at Shergat. These included the papers belonging to Lady Surma, aunt of Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun, connected with her mission to England. Therefore, Mar Timotheus on April 22, 1921 wrote to the Director of Repatriation in Mosul.¹⁴

Lady Surma is very sorry to hear that they are lost and she likes to have copies of them. She wants some to write to you asking to be kind enough to take the trouble of getting for her copies of telegrams and all the papers, dated between The summer of 1919 and her return to Mosul, connected with her mission to England and also with the nation, both from the Indian and foreign offices. Please oblige.

Another important issue Mar Timotheus had to face during this trip was an attempt of some leaders to deny the leadership of the hereditary Patriarchal family. In a petition submitted by six sections of the people 14, 15, 16, 17, 20 and 21 drafted at Mindan on May 8, 1921 and sent to the Director of Repatriation they expressed their dissatisfaction with the patriarchal family.¹⁵ They wanted to make Mar Timotheus the Patriarch. After Mar Timotheus had read this petition he wrote a letter on 6 May 1921 to the same officer offering his comments. He did not want any such attempt for his personal glory. He knew that any split among the Assyrians would ruin the whole Assyrian nation. The paragraphs 3 and 4 of that letter are as follows.¹⁶

As mentioned about my personality, I am very sorry, I cannot be an instrument for splitting and destroying my beloved church and na-

¹⁴ Letter to the Director of Repatriation in Mosul dated 22 April, 1921.

¹⁵ Letter of some leaders to the Director of Repatriation dated 8 May, 1921.

¹⁶ Letter of Mar Timotheus dated 6 May, 1921.

tion. I am the more sorry that those who are closely acquainted with me and know fully about me, know that there is nothing more beloved to me than the unity and binding the nation under the Headship as the benefits of which have been realised by the whole nation long ago. The same ones now, I am afraid, are trying to make me if I became a fool to such a degree – the destroyer of the same building that I want to build by all means on its own foundation. This makes me feel more sorry to them than for myself.

Now, as I am selected the Regent to the Patriarch by my brother heads and others, I am inviting them also to agree, come and see that the same things and good intention for the edification and up-lift of the national success are being done in all truth and love and far from all personal benefit; and if their intention and selection about me are pure in raising me to such a position, no doubt, they must come and agree if not they want split and we cannot work against the Will of God which is love and unity.

Mar Timotheus attempted also to arrange for the education of the Assyrian children. Owing to World War, these children did not get the opportunity to go to school. In a petition dated July 28th, 1921 signed by Mar Timotheus, Mar Khananeesho and Mar Sargis addressed to the Divisional Adviser, they requested as follows.¹⁷

It is a well accepted truth that 'Education' is one of the primary factors for the well being and uplift of society and nation: but it is a regrettable fact that our people who were receiving a sort of regular education till some seven years back, have been deprived of it, ever since the beginning of this Great tragical war, and our entry in the noble cause of the Allies. All along the period of our fights for our existence and the consequent flights and moving of our camp from place to place, and our unsettled condition we had no chance of giving any kind of education to our children. At the same time it is worth mentioning that many of our children, impelled by the great

¹⁷ Petition dated July 28, 1921, addressed to the Divisional Advisor, Archives, Trichur.

desire for knowledge, have picked up a little English and a little of our own language, Syriac; but it is irregular and in part.

Now we are settled here under the protection of H.M.G. and the feeling of our duty to give proper and regular education to our children weighs heavily in our minds. We are refugees, poor and have hardly left anything with us; so, we find it beyond our power to do it ourselves.

We therefore request the Government to be kind enough to open for our children Government schools, one in Mosul for our grown up children who could be gathered from the villages and others in the villages where our people are settled.

He had to write several letters to the Director of Repatriation. Col. Cunliffe Owen during his stay in 1920 – 1921 at Mosul. To give a glimpse to the readers of the type of responsibility, an interesting letter is quoted below. This letter was written to ask the wives of Khoshaba Hammu and Mishqo Khananishu to go with their husbands. When all his attempts and letters failed to achieve the desired results, he wrote to the Director of Repatriation again.¹⁸

Sir,

I should like to bring before you the following lines.

Sophia and Nanajan, the two Assyrian women to whom the other day you ordered to go with their respective husbands Khoshaba Hammu and Mishqo Khananishu, disobeying the order, deserted them again while they were returning from your office.

The husbands now request that if their wives are not coming with them, their property, in the list given below, which the woman took with them while deserting them should be taken and given to them.

I beg to remain, Sir,

Yours obediently,

Mosul,

(Sd)

Mar Timotheus Metropolitan

¹⁸ Letter dated 9 - 3- 1921, to the Director of Repatriation, Archives, Trichur.

Khoshaba Hammu

1. His daughter Halini
2. Fifty only Turkish sovereign
3. One pair of gold earring weighing
One Turkish gold & Rs.5 /-
for Workmanship.
4. One quilt, one pillow & one blanket

Mishqo Khananishu

1. Seven Turkish sovereign
2. One necklace costing eight
Turkish gold
3. One cross
4. Two quilts, One pillow

A very important action that had far reaching consequences for the Indian Church took place in May 1921 during the second trip. At Mosul, Mar Timotheus met a seventeen-year-old boy named Mansur, belonging to Eyal village close to the village of Mar Bishu, where Mar Abimalek Timotheus himself was born. Although the young Mansur did not belong to a priestly family, Mar Abimalek Timotheus was able to spot special abilities in this boy. Hence, Mar Timotheus ordained this boy on May 1921, the third Sunday of Easter, in a Jacobite Church in Mosul. Neither Mar Timotheus nor this young deacon could foresee that this young man would be his successor in the distant diocese of India. Therefore, it can be said that even during his tour in Iraq he did a great service for the Indian church unknowingly.¹⁹

Regarding the settlement of the Assyrian refugees in Iraq Rev. W.A. Wigram writes on Sept 6, 1921 to the archbishop of Canterbury.²⁰

The settlement is now done. A liberal money grant (Rs.122 per head) has been paid to every individual Assyrian under British care at the time of the dispersal of the refugee camp.

Wigram says about the Assyrians from Urmia. “ The Urmi portion of the

¹⁹ By a curious coincidence this boy Mansur was born on the first anniversary of the priesthood of Mar Timotheus on 21 September 1904. Mar Timotheus who died on 30 April 1945 never knew that his successor in India would be the boy born on the first anniversary of his ordination to priesthood in his neighbouring village, Eyal near Mar Bishu.

²⁰ Letter of W.A. Wigram to the Archbishop of Canterbury dated Sept 6, 1921, Lambeth Palace Library copied and preserved in Trichur Archives in CD-ROM 144.

nation, 9000 people in all, refused to accept settlement in Mesopotamia, preferring in the teeth of all warnings to take their money grant, and “return to Urmi.”

This, as was expected, has proved impossible, for the Persian authorities forbade them to cross the frontier. These people have scattered, and will be absorbed in the town population of Irak. They are thus lost to the nation, as also are several thousands who left Baqubah and Mindan camps before they are closed, and have found work elsewhere.

Thus, the settlement of the 40000 Assyrian refugees who threw themselves on British protection in 1918, has been like much else in Mesopotamia, a “botched job”, and very different from what was hoped for at first.

In this report Rev. W.A. Wigram writes that the Assyrians are unhappy with this settlement. But he writes that the British officers say different story. In that letter Wigram writes.²¹

British officers say, “We have done our best, at enormous expense and trouble, for a set of thankless rascals, whom it is impossible to help”.

The same letter informs the Archbishop that the Patriarchal family is given, in addition to the usual Rs.122 to each member, “a small grant to put the building in habitable repair, and has promised to give the family a maintenance allowance of Rs.250 per month for one year, and a grant of lands. These promises are now being carried out.”²²

Wigram further remarks, “Divisions and quarrels, that eternal curse of this nation, are naturally rife, and of these 15000 people, only a small minority of 3 - 4000 at most, recognize the boy -patriarch.”²³

Rev. Wigram says Agha Patros is behind all this division in the Assyrian

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Church. Although Petros has left the country; still there is danger of division. He remarks, "All schools have ceased to work in the nation since 1914, so that a practically illiterate generation is growing up."²⁴

Mar Timotheus returned to Trichur after his second trip only on November 5, 1921. He had left Mosul on October 12 and on his way had stopped at Baghdad for nearly a week. From Baghdad he proceeded to Basrah where he stayed for only one day before he sailed for India. About his journey Mar Timotheus writes to General Nightingale of Mosul; "I am glad. I had a very pleasant voyage throughout". About his arrival at Trichur Mar Timotheus writes: "I must say that I fully realized the pleasure, when I met again my congregation here, as a father does, when he meets his children after a long absence".²⁵

Though Mar Timotheus returned to India on November 5, 1921 he had planned to go abroad again particularly to England and America to plead for the cause of his own Assyrian people. But he could not immediately leave India because the affairs of the Indian Church had not improved since he left in 1920.

Though the judgment of the additional District Judge in favour of Mar Timotheus had been delivered on April 17, 1920 before his second trip, his party had not obtained possession of the Big church, as an appeal was pending. The congregation was worshipping in the Mar Yokhannan Mamdhana Church.

At the same time, he made attempts to go abroad. On March 28th, 1922 he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury requesting for a reply to his earlier letter dated August 16, 1921 sent from Mosul requesting arrangements for a personal delegate of the Assyrians to visit England and America.²⁶ Though the name of the delegate is not mentioned Mar Timotheus states: "Mean-

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Letter to the Rev. J.T.Hales, Archives, Trichur.

²⁶ Book of copies of letters, No.29, Archives, Trichur.

while as a delegate must needs be sent as early as possible arrangements are being made for his journey to England and to America".²⁷

On June 5th, 1922, Mar Timotheus wrote to the British Resident in Travancore and Cochin living in Trivandrum requesting for the necessary travels papers. He writes: ²⁸

The present authorities of our church in Mosul have asked me to go to the United States of America on a pastoral visit to my countrymen there. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to go to America for a change and try to regain health and vigour by treatment if necessary.

Owing to the appeal of the Trichur church case, pending in the chief court of Cochin Mar Timotheus was not able to leave Trichur in 1922. After the decision of appeal on January 2, 1923 and the unfortunate developments in Trichur²⁹ following the legal victory of his party, Mar Timotheus went to Iraq in 1923. This time he took a young deacon, C.J. Chacko who was completing his studies for B.A. degree in Trichinopoly.

The main purpose of this trip was to go to England to get help for the settlement of the Assyrian refugees. He had also planned to go to America to collect money for the Assyrians.

Mar Timotheus met several important dignitaries connected with Iraq and India, and he wanted to solve the Assyrian refugees' problem, as well as the question of the getting possession of the Big Church in Trichur.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Letter to the Resident No.45 in the Book of Office copies of letters. In this letter he also requested for passport for two priests, the Rev. K.L.Poulose and Rev. N.I.Ignatius. On 6 November 1922, he wrote to drop the name of the Rev. N.I. Ignatius, who had accompanied him in his first two trips.

²⁹ The "Award" of the British Resident in Travancore & Cochin, Mr. C.W.E. Cotton settled this legal issue only in April 1925.

4.4 The Visit Of Mar Timotheus To England And America 1923 - 1925

In August 1923, Mar Timotheus accompanied by Deacon C.J. Chacko sailed from Colombo and reached England by the S.S. Oxfordshire belonging to the Bibby line. They were taken to St. Edwards House at 22, Great College Street, at Westminster in South West London. They stayed there for about eight months until they left for America, in April 1924.

The Rev. F.N. Heazell who was formerly known to Mar Timotheus in Kurdistan, was a source of great help as he was living in England and trying to arouse the interest of the English people in the Assyrian refugees. The Rev. A.J. Douglas, the Rev. A.J. Mason, the Rev. G.K.A. Bell, the Rev. H.J. Fynes-Clinton and others helped him very much.

Regarding the Assyrian problem Mar Timotheus tried to get a letter printed so that he could send it to about 300 persons. He approached the Oxford University Press, which returned the copy saying that their Syriac types were very large. Four days later they agreed and asked them to provide English translation of the letter. Soon afterwards, on January 26, 1924 Mr. Frederick Hall, the Controller of the University Press wrote:³⁰

Since I sent you the estimate on the 23rd circumstances have arisen which would make it difficult for me to print your letter and I therefore return both sets of copy.

Disappointed by this, Mar Timotheus approached the Trinitarian Bible Society with a request to get the Syriac letter printed. They too declined.³¹

In reply to your letter of the 29th instant, we do not print anything in Syriac, or in any foreign language, except the Scriptures. That is the Bible, New Testament, or portions printed from them.

³⁰ Letter of Frederick Hall to Mar Timotheus on January 26, 1924, Archives, Trichur.

³¹ Cf. Mar Aprem., *Mar Abimalek Timotheus: A Biography*, Mar Narsai Press, Trichur, 1975, pp.91 -92.

Our rules would not permit us to print anything in the nature of a private letter written by yourself.

Finally, Deacon Chacko managed to get this Syriac letter lithographed by To Waterlow & Sons Ltd.³²

After an interview with the Secretary of State for India Sir Thomas, Mar Timotheus submitted a written memorandum on the church case in Trichur, on January 30, 1924. On February 26, 1924 the India office at Whitehall, London replied:³³

I am directed by the Secretary of State for India to inform you that he has forwarded to the Government of India a copy of the representation submitted by you on the 30th January, relative to the affairs of the Syro Chaldean Christian community of Cochin.

The Eastern Churches committee of the Anglican Church made all the necessary arrangements for his stay and for his contacts with religious leaders and government officials. They also arranged for him to celebrate Holy Communion service at St. Edwards House Chapel. When he celebrated Holy Eucharist at 10:30 a.m. on January 28, 1924, the Rev. Fynes-Clinton of the Eastern Churches committee sent out a typed invitation with the following note.³⁴

You are invited to assist and to pray with him for the restoration of their Homeland and freedom of the distressed remnants of the Assyrian people.

One of the significant services, which the Rev. C.F. Andrews rendered to Mar Timotheus, was to make the services of Mr. Hy. S. L. Polak available to him to give expert legal advice on a representation to the India Office in

³² The lithographing of 200 copies of a 2 ft. 4 inches, 1/2 sheet, back and front, cost 13/15/0.

³³ Reply from India Office dated 26 February 1924.

³⁴ Invitation of the Rev. Fynes-Clinton, preserved in Archives, Trichur.

London regarding the final settlement of the Trichur Church case. In January 1924 the Rev. C.F. Andrews was in London while Mar Timotheus was staying there. Since the Rev. C.F. Andrews had met Mar Timotheus at Trichur in January 1922 he was aware of the difficulties Mar Timotheus was going through on account of the Trichur Church case. The legal advice of Mr. Polak as well as contacts with officials paved the way for the arbitration of Mr. C.W. E. Cotton.

After meeting with different officials of the British Government pleading for the Assyrians, Mar Timotheus did not get any promise for the future of the Assyrians. Therefore, he was getting impatient. It was at this time that an Assyrian named General Agha Petros Eleow, who had deserted Mar Shimun family and the Nestorians in general, extended his right hand of fellowship. General Agha Petros de Baz had been honoured by His Holiness Pope Leo XII as well as by the Russians. He was living in France at that time. He came to London to reconcile with Mar Timotheus and to plan joint programmes for the Assyrian cause. On November 21, 1923, Agha Petros wrote to Mar Timotheus from Hotel Cecil in London in Syriac. An English translation of the letter is given below:³⁵

Our excellent Father, Mar Timotheus, Patriarchal Representative and Metropolitan of all India, peace in our Lord. In kissing your hands, I request your prayers.

I heard that Your Holiness is here in London, with the Patriarchal Representation to work among the English Nation, for the existence and good of our Assyrian Nation. Not only did I rejoice very much but also wanted to inform you that the same is the desire of my heart also. On this ground, from my whole heart, I appeal that all the past occurrences be forgotten, and with a new and simple heart full of love and peace through the medium of your fatherhood, I come in peace to ask pardon, from the Patriarchal family and in extreme reverence and respect. I acknowledge that beloved and noble Patriarch as the general head of all our Assyrian Nation: and behold from

³⁵ Letter of Agha Petros dated 21 November 1923, Archives, Trichur.

this moment, I give all my strength to work with your fatherhood, which is the Patriarchal representative, for the fulfilment of this aim which is the good of our Nation, that she may have a national home under the protection and guidance of Great Britain, in the maps that we both think suitable. I promise to fulfil all that I have written, that I will be a most faithful servant of the holy family of our beloved Patriarch as I have been in the time of my master, late Mar Benjamin Shimun and far more. I have the honour to be your servant, and under your hand in all national services.

On November 8, 1923, Mar Timotheus replied to Agha Petros accepting his reconciliation, hoping that the Patriarch would approve of this. Mar Timotheus immediately wrote to the following prominent persons communicating a copy of this letter.

The Archbishop of Canterbury
 Marquess Curzon (Foreign Secretary)
 The Duke of Devonshire (Colonial Secretary)
 Sir John Shuckbury, permanent Under Secretary (Colonial office)
 Hon. Mr. Ormsby Gore, Under Secretary

But this reconciliation had serious repercussions in the Middle East. The Rev. W. A. Wigram who knew Agha Petros wrote letters to the Chaplain of the Archbishop of Canterbury advising against this reconciliation. Some paragraphs of this letter are interesting and hence quoted below: ³⁶

Patros Agha is, I understand, in London now, but perhaps my remark that London ought to know better than to trust that inveterate intriguer, shows undue optimism. At least, there was a project in fact to send him out to Mesopotamia again, "to make himself generally useful" (which would certainly be a change of occupation for him) and Mesopotamia where men had protested strongly against his coming, had the impression, wrong in fact, that he had actually started.

³⁶ Letter of W.A. Wigram to the Archbishop's Chaplain in the Archives, Trichur.

They had the proper people waiting for him on the quay at Basra, when his supposed ship came up the river—with a return ticket for him! He was not, however, on board. If Mesopotamian authorities do know Petros by now, they seem to have something to learn about another rascal out there.

Simko Agha, the murderer of Mar Shimun, has been definitely smashed up by the Persians, using Russian refugees for the purpose. The man himself escaped, but his following were dispersed. He is, as you know, a small man by birth, but had a big following while he was successful.

Sir J. Dobbs however was so lamentably ignorant of all the man's history that he had ideas of making use of the man as an ally and proposed to have him sent to Mosul by aeroplane. When our agents will go on acting in such a style as this, is it remarkable that our allies find it difficult to trust us?

A time was fixed for the arrival of the aeroplane and many officers were on the spot anxious to see so renowned a rascal. It was noted too that about a dozen Assyrians had turned up also, unobtrusively, but with their rifles! There was no doubt what they had come to do, of course, but by better luck than Dobbs deserved, when the aeroplane arrived, Simko was not in it. He had funk, knowing what the Assyrian is capable of and what he personally deserves! But what a mentality does this reveal in the British general.

On December 7, 1924 the Rev. W. A. Wigram wrote to Mar Timotheus ³⁷

As for Petros Agha, we must hope that you have been rightly guided, as I know your intention has been most honest and Christian, and that your one wish has been to do what is best for the nation.

Still Mar Timotheus continued to be in touch with Agha Petros who had

³⁷ Letter of W.A. Wigram to Mar Timotheus dated 7 December 1924, Archives, Trichur.

returned to France. But Patriarch Mar Shimun and his Aunt Lady Surma did not approve of the reconciliation of Agha Petros. Therefore, they commanded Mar Timotheus not to have any deal with Agha Petros. Reluctantly on January 14, 1925 Mar Timotheus communicated to all concerned that he had “received instructions from the government of Mar Shimun to the effect that this is not approved”. He continued.³⁸

Finding also myself that I cannot take part in any communication they may be made on his part with the French Government, and for other reasons, I wish to say that in future I desire to communicate with H.M. Government acting alone as Representative of Mar Shimun.

After meeting with the Under Secretary of State for foreign affairs at the colonial office in London in January 1924, Mar Timotheus wrote to him on February 4, 1924 forwarding a copy of the petition to be presented by the maliks of the various Assyrian tribes to His Majesty’s High Commissioner in Iraq on December 14, 1923. Although the petition does not have an immediate relevance today as situations have changed considerably since then, it is reproduced below. It helps one to know what the unfulfilled aspirations of the Assyrians were during 1923–1924.³⁹

We the undersigned maliks (leaders) of the five independent tribes of Jelu, Baz, Tiari, Tkhuma and Dizen beg to remind your Excellency the necessary conditions regarding the settlement of our nation.

First of all we beg to acknowledge our thanks for your Excellency’s kind personal visit unto us, by which we had a good hope, as, was understood by us, that the above mentioned four tribes (Tiari, Tkhuma, Jelu and Baz) may come within the Iraq boundary, under British protection as we hope, and under the same administration as we had in past before the Great War.

³⁸ Letter of Mar Timotheus dated 14 January 1925, Archives, Trichur.

³⁹ Petition of Maliks dated 14th December 1923, Archives, Trichur.

Regarding as it will appear an adventure to show our affection towards our Brethren and Motherland. It would be rather impossible for us to live there without the settlement of our Brethren of Shamizden, Marbeshu, Garwar, Barwar, Liwoon, Albak and Sarra in the districts of Julamerk, Dizza and Nerie. As Jelu and Dizen they depend upon Gawar for their livelihood, upper Tiari depends upon Liwoon; and the remainder of Tiari and Tkhuma they depend upon Julamerk for their livelihood: under these circumstances two third of our nation remains homeless in Iraq, besides numerous Brethren who evacuated their country with us, they took refuge in Russia and other countries, are still awaiting for a relief by us, that they may also return and look after their families.

We whom have been thought settled in our houses, really speaking we do never think ourselves settled as yet. If the political situation do not suit the future of our nation i.e. if the nation is not centralised around us, we cannot protect our country as we have the experience of our lives in the past, in the neighbourhood of Kurdistan, as for the preservation of our language and religion, and to supplement the inhabitants of those districts which are naturally bound with each other.

If the above stated circumstances are not arranged for us, then; it clearly shows that there is no place remaining for us in IRAQ the above petition is offered before the boundaries of Iraq and Turkey are fixed. Humbly awaiting a good result and a favourable reply.

We beg to remain,
May it please Your Excellency
Most obedient servants.

Sd/-

Tiari	Tkhuma	Jelu	Baz	Diez
Malik Ismail	Malik Gilyana	Malik Nimrut	Malik Mirza	Malik Khamu
Malik Warda	Malik Khamu			

Mosul dated 14th December, 1923.

Mar Timotheus made use of his stay in England to make arrangements for the education of the boy Patriarch Mar Shimun. After giving serious consideration to the various issues involved in this matter the Rev. H. J. Fynes Clinton wrote to Mar Timotheus on March 25, 1924.⁴⁰

I think with you and all the friends I am sure of the Assyrians that it is entirely advisable that Mar Shimun should receive such an education which would best fit him for his future life of responsibility, as we hope, and great opportunities of good for his people. I venture to think also that, in view of experience, the right sort of English training would be the best for him: the question is where that can best be obtained. There are advantages and disadvantages to be considered in his coming to England. I think that to put him, at his age in a English public school would be to place him in an atmosphere for which he would not be adequately prepared by years of early training. There is always a tendency in boys from the East to get out of such a life rather superficial characteristics than the real character training for which English public schools are famous, if they do not enter early enough. The outlook on life and the prominence of athletics that he would find would not, I think, be the best possible guide for him with regard to his future: and then it must be borne in mind that he is already an ecclesiastic, which would, or ought to make a certain difference between him and the other boys. In book work too he would find himself I fear, unprepared to work with the boys of his age and he might have to be put among younger boys for work while physically he would be more developed than boys of his own age.

There is a school at Kelham kept by monks which gives preparation for the priesthood to boys of all ages but we have not many schools of the kind. Rather than a public school I would suggest private tuition in the right kind of family in England; but; as I said to you, after much thought I am convinced that the best opportunity open to him is at St. George's College, Jerusalem, which is a school under

⁴⁰ Letter of Rev. H.J.F. Clinton to Mar Timotheus dated March 25, 1924, Archives, Trichur.

the immediate supervision of our Bishop and the Canons of the Cathedral, and staffed by excellent teachers. It is established for the express purpose of providing what is best in, English education, methods of character training and school social life: but adapted after experience for Eastern boys who will be spending their life in the East. I am told by the secretary that it is attended by the highest class of boys in Palestine and the surrounding countries and by the sons of Chieftains.

If thought good, Mar Shimun could pay a short visit to England now, in which case we would all do our best to help him see things and persons.

At the age of 18 or 19 I hope he would come to England to finish his education at the London University.

Believe me,

Always very sincerely and at your service.

Lady Surma sent a telegram from Mosul to Mar Timotheus, which reached on April 12, after Mar Timotheus had left for America.⁴¹

Prefer tutor for Ishai in England.

Letter follows. Surma

On June 6, 1924, the Rev. H. J. Fynes-Clinton of the Eastern Churches committee in England wrote to Mar Timotheus:⁴²

I am sorry Lady Surma has decided to send Mar Shimun at once to England. I spoke to our Bishop in Jerusalem and to the headmaster of St. George's College and School about the possibility of his going there: they were delighted to hear of the possibility; and both, as well as Archdeacon Waddy, said they would do their utmost to help him. I am sure it would be wise to send him there for a couple of

⁴¹ Telegram of Surma to Mar Timotheus dated April 12, 1924, Archives, Trichur.

⁴² Letter of Rev. H.J.F. Clinton to Mar Timotheus dated June 6, 1924, Archives, Trichur.

years. He could have two or three terms in the boys' school, and then two or three in the college, and then come to England. I am writing to Lady Surma to explain my advice, and if they still determine otherwise we shall all do our best for the boy in England. There are four Syrians about to be trained for the Syrian Orthodox priesthood in St. George's College at the request of the Patriarch.

You will have seen that Sir Percy Cox's negotiations with the Turks at Lausanne are not going well, and that he is standing firm. I only hope that this will mean good for you. I am very sorry to hear that you have had bad news from India. I am writing at once to Sir William Duke.

Still Mar Eshai Shimun was sent to England in 1925 where he studied for two years at Canterbury and at Cambridge.

In the second week of April 1924 Mar Timotheus left London to begin his American tour. Although Mar Timotheus and Deacon Chacko landed in New York, they did not stay there long. His first stay in America was in Chicago where he stayed at Rooms 1108 and 1109 at the Le Salle Hotel.

On the Easter Day, 1924 he met the Bishop of Chicago at his residence. On April 27, Mar Timotheus was invited to conduct service from 8.30 to 10 at St. James church, Chicago for the Assyrians who were living in that area. But Mar Timotheus requested for the hours from 8.30 to 1.30 noon for services. The Rev. Duncan H. Browne, Rector of St. James Church, replied:⁴³

I am just in receipt of your letter dated April 24th and while it would be impossible to reserve St. James' Church for you during the hours mentioned in your letter from eight-thirty A.M. to one-thirty P.M. because of our own services, it will give me very great pleasure to have you and your people worship in the auditorium of the Parish House during those hours on Sunday next, April 27th.

Believe me

with sincere regards

⁴³ Letter of Rev. Duncan H. Browne to Mar Timotheus, dated April 15, 1924, Archives, Trichur.

Even though Mar Timotheus left England his friends kept writing to him all the news in England. They continued to exercise their influence for the settlement of the Assyrian problem. The Rev. J. A. Douglas, who was a good friend of the Eastern Churches in general and of the Assyrian Church in particular, wrote on 15 April 1924 to Mar Timotheus:⁴⁴

After visiting many American churches, belonging to the Episcopal Church and speaking at several church services of that denomination, Mar Timotheus finally submitted a memorandum to the authorities of the Episcopal Church seeking help. The relevant paragraphs of that memorandum dated October 1, 1924 are reproduced below:⁴⁵

For the last few decades our church has been fortunate in receiving the active help of the mission of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Much has been done by this mission for the welfare of our people along educational lines and we shall always be grateful for this timely assistance. Unfortunately conditions following upon the war—in which we cast our lot with the Allies, regardless of consequence—have made it impossible for various reasons, for that mission to resume its work among our people. Members of the Episcopal Church of America also gave generous aid for many years.

I need hardly say what a serious blow the withdrawal of this aid was to me. My people are scattered, the majority on the point of starvation, in the Caucasus, being at the same time without proper spiritual leaders; others now in the hot plains of Mesopotamia are a prey to malaria and other diseases caused by extreme heat and other difficulties, that gradually but surely tends to our final extinction. For, as you remember, the Mountain –Assyrians cannot but suffer considerably, having been heretofore accustomed to living for the larger portion of the year in a cool climate; our brethren Assyrians, now gathering in Persia also suffer terrible hardships and misery, while the few thousands who have liberty are not anyway better

⁴⁴ Letter of Rev. J.A. Douglas, dated April 15, 1924, Archives, Trichur.

⁴⁵ Memorandum by Mar Timotheus to the Episcopal Church sent on October 1st 1924.

financially, and a good many whose conditions are not clear, are scattered in countries like France and Greece.

I have, therefore, turned toward the church in America in the hope that I might find among the American Episcopalians the active Christian sympathy and help, which is so intimately connected with the American people. Moreover, it was a matter of no little pleasure and consolation for me to learn from the Rev. Dr. W. C. Emhardt of the American Episcopal church, that thy beloved brother in Christ, His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury is perfectly willing that the church in America should continue their support of the work among Assyrians and formulate policy of its own.

Undoubtedly, the emergency is great; every moment counts against our people physically as well as spiritually; they are left without adequate spiritual leaders, a prey of physical hunger and all, which it implies; they are rapidly becoming extinguished as a people and a church. About 40,000, that is more than a clear half of the remaining Assyrians, have been driven by the terrible course of the recent world war into the Caucasus and other parts of Russia, destitute of every thing. From ten to twenty thousand are in various parts of Mesopotamia, helpless aliens among unfriendly races, with perilous climatic adversity to add to their inexpressible misery.

The definite things, therefore, for which I appeal to the American Episcopal Church are:

1. Assistance in maintaining the existence of our church at home. This cannot be done without educated clergy. Since the withdrawal of the Archbishop's Mission our theological students have been without instruction. Our Episcopate is now reduced to five members, and Clergy capable of elevation to that office are extremely rare. If young men are not trained at once we are in danger of losing our Apostolic succession.

Of equal importance is the Education of our young people. Years of wandering have deprived us of all educational opportunities, our children are growing up in ignorance with the exception of those who are willing to purchase education by renouncing the faith of their forefathers and thereby becoming a thorn in the side of the Mother church.

Our churches; many dating back to Ante Nicene days, have been destroyed. We are in great need of inexpensive buildings where our people may worship after the manner of their fathers.

All our Service Books as well as every book of secular learning were destroyed. A small press has been established and should be maintained.

2. Assistance in maintaining our church in America. Our communities in America are making a valiant effort to organize and maintain churches.

There is need of more definite co-operation between our priests and congregation in America. If a Committee of the Episcopal Church could be appointed to confer with myself and consider this, a helpful policy might be determined. Our priests and congregation in America need direction and discipline in matters not pertaining to doctrine and practice. Before my departure, it is my intention to appoint a committee of my own people in hope that they may receive direction and guidance from a Bishop or Bishops of the Episcopal Church.

It is indeed a foregone conclusion that today our church desires and in fact is in real need of, efficient advice and substantial help in such a degree as would soon renew and renovate her in her own way and manner; and I may herein declare that it is the full and mature confidence we all cherish and entertain that the sister church in America will undertake all her activities in a sympathetic and fraternal atti-

tude, as an unquestioned token of her unselfish intention to strengthen us—The sister—Church of the East, whenever her members are perchance and perforce found.

I request, therefore, the protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America to consider my appeal in all its phase and adequately respond to our pressing needs, thus helping us to preserve and maintain our solidarity and integrity as a Church and a people for the eternal edification and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; and let the faithful representatives of the disciples of him whom we adore in Unity with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be reminded of His precious command:

Gather up the Fragments, that nothing be lost.

Sent on:

October 1st, 1924

Mar Timotheus

During his third trip, which was his only visit to the United States of America, he organized the first Nestorian parish in that continent. This parish at 1801 Hammond Street, Chicago, consisted of the immigrants from the Middle East who had gone to America since the beginning of the present century and particularly since the beginning of the First World War in 1914.

Mar Timotheus collected money in America and bought land for the first Assyrian church in Chicago.

The office bearers of this first Assyrian parish in Chicago were Pastor: Rev. T. N. Esmail. Officers: E. E. Sayad - president, Deacon J. J. De Kelaita - Secretary, Odisho - Assistant Secretary, Deacon J. Georges -Treasurer, Deacon R.H. David.

Trustees: Deacon S.A. Badal, J. Odisho, S. Jacobs, D. Joseph, B. Benjamin.

Even after he had returned to India in 1925 he kept up his interest in the American Assyrians although he could no more meet any of them personally. Even after many years, several of the early American Assyrians and many of his relatives who since then emigrated to America remember with gratitude the efforts for them made by Mar Abimalek Timotheus of Kelaita family. One of them Deacon Joash J. De Kelaita, who was mainly responsible for making arrangements for his stay in Chicago, kept correspondence with him. The following letter is interesting and hence quoted without correcting spelling or grammar.

The letter dated March 26, is as follows: ⁴⁶

As usual. I want to beg of you to excuse my delaying of your answer for many letter have receive from your grace. The reason for not writing is: I have been busy and lazy. From now on I will do better and better: in this few lines I want to write few things that may interest you.

First of all: that we here at a church we are getting alone fine in every respect: Our Priest has being drinking lately but we have skared him out of it, we told him if he don't stop: We will let him go: some one Els will take his place: As he is going slow now; but sure: I also want you to know that we could and have made \$ 9,000 cash – if we had sold the church place, but we want double amount or nothing.

The little chapel is getting too small for the afternoon services. We made the yearly payment of the house last 10th of February.

The money we had gathered to sent you has only \$ 150/-or lettle more. So we wanted to colect some more; but for many othur chengis it was delayed uontel now: So last week I mentioned to the Motwa and they desidet that Shamasha Kakoo send the amount mentioned above; the following day I will see that he will if he has not this evening.

⁴⁶ Letter of Deacon Joash de Kelaita, dated March 26, 1926, Archives, Trichur.

Last few weeks we had send R. H. David to all of the places that our churches are on his own expenses thanks to him.

...The next thing want to write is that Surma has arrived in New York a few days ago. Mr. Emhart cabled for her to us if any Assyrians wish to go to meet the Lady there: 2 days latter there was two more cables one to Azoo; one to Nestoris: signed Emhart: so at our motwa we, desidet not to sent any one if the cablegram was not signed Surma so we cabled and told them if Mr. Emhart or Surma want us to come it is not necessary but if she want us to send any one: She must sign her telegram. So she did, and we send Rev. R. H. David with the orders of the Motwa to have no busines dealing with her or any one els exept at the presence of our Chicago Motwa: besides we have agreed if there need be to do any kind of busences or signing of any agreement there shal be non expt those that, your Grace wanted before or now will want us to sign: we are satesfied to be left alon as we are if we can help it: and if you can help us.

Write to Eramia Elisha and to me too. I am your cousen Shamasha
Joash J. De Kelaita,
1075 N. Wells Street,
Chicago, III,
U.S.A.

P.S. Do not address to me as Reverant that is the reason, the mail returns to you. No priest works in restaurant as cook. Mr. is my name.

During his stay in Chicago Mar Timotheus contacted leaders of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America (Equivalent of the Anglican Church) and created concern and sympathy for the Assyrian refugees. Still that help was not enough to cope with the enormous demand for help by the Assyrians. Mar Timotheus was not happy with the help that was available by the time he left America, he was critical of these churches since he could not get as much support as he had anticipated.

The Churchman dated December 13, 1924 contains a large article entitled. "To save the Assyrian church and Nation", In it we read ⁴⁷

Mar Timotheus, as the Regent to the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun, who was only a minor used his stay in America to discuss with the leaders of the Episcopal Church in America for finding a solution to the problem of the settlement of the Assyrians. Although nothing came out of these talks, he has kept some useful notes on the terms for the settlement as discussed at that time. Since the Kurdish and the Assyrian problems are still unsettled the present generation may find the following notes useful.

The following were the suggestions made by the British friends of Mar Timotheus and found in his file.⁴⁸

By the treaty of Lausanne, the necessity is imminent of delimiting the frontiers of Iraq, the Mosul frontier must be regulated by the British Government.

In view of the increasing probability of the evacuation of this area owing to the agitation for economy and the decrease of our military commitments, we desire to call attention to the fact that there are several minority races included in the present frontier for the safety of which we have a great moral responsibility and who might be exposed to injustice from our successors in occupation whether Turk or Arab.

This area is peopled by the Kurds, Turcomans and Arabs, all Mohammedan, and by the Christian peoples, the Assyrians and Chaldeans (Uniat Catholic) some Western Syrians, and Armenians; also Jews and especially in the Northwest the Yezidis (sun worshipers). These people are largely intermingled in territory and it would be undesirable for one of them to be in a position of dominance over the others.

⁴⁷ *The Churchman*, Dated Dec. 13, 1924, Archives, Trichur.

⁴⁸ Letters of Mar Timotheus, Archives, Trichur.

These peoples, especially the Assyrians and Yezidis came out boldly on our side during the war and made our cause their cause in the hope that when peace was made the promise made of freedom and safety for their own country would be honoured. The Assyrians raised over 6 battalions under British officers, and in many battles stemmed a Turkish advance and at the present moment over 2,000 are guarding our present frontiers in Northern Iraq.

It is only too likely therefore that if left unprotected they will be exposed to grave dangers. The Assyrian people mentioned above are exiles from their own country, which lies, to the north of the Iraq frontier and to the northeast in the plane of Urmia. They are now living in the plane which has proved for mountaineers very unhealthy and are naturally intensely desirous of returning to their ancient villages and churches in their own historic land.

It has been suggested that, in view of their great military services to us and the confidence the Assyrians have in their own ability to maintain themselves against all attacks from the Kurds and local enemies, the British Government should provide them with arms and ammunition when evacuation takes place. We fear, however, that this might be regarded as a provocation. The Assyrians have lost more than half of their pre-war population by exposure and massacre.

Thousands have fled as refugees to the Caucasus and other parts and are to be found as far as Moscow and at various points on the Mediterranean. It is believed that if peace and safety could be ensured for them in a country of their own, many of these refugees and some from America would return to their people and Patriarch. In their indomitable hope and courage they insist strongly on their right to repatriation, and their national unity and spirit can no doubt best be preserved and fostered by loyalty to chieftanship and patriarchate.

While we recognise the justice of their claims to repatriation and protection we feel that in view of the probable refusal of the Turks and Persians to allow this, and the fear of their vengeance, should repatriation be forced, it would be unwise to insist.

Although all concerned people who were involved in finding a just solution to this tragic problem of this Assyrian refugees the British suggested the following scheme:- ⁴⁹

That an international Free State be established in this northern area of Iraq, taken over, guaranteed and would be on a political equality preserving as far as possible their internal autonomy under their several Chieftains.

This State to be controlled by the Governor General appointed by the League of Nations and policed by the gendarmerie officered by British or an International corps.

Such a Free State would be more welcome to the Turks than a nominally Christian one. It would have more chance of survival than one composed of Assyrians alone or a definitely Christian State. It would form a valuable buffer state between Turkey, Persia, and Baghdad.

Suggested boundaries for negotiations would be roughly as follows:
- on the South–Karkouk; on the Southeast Solleimanie, on the North-east–Revendous and Zebor, on the North–Amadia and Zacho, on the North-west–the Jebel Sinjar and the South-west Lake Sneiseleh.

These boundaries do not give to the Assyrians their ancient homes, churches, and properties and therefore can only be regarded as provisional, hoping that in time there may be gradual percolation back into these territories of both Assyrians and to the North, Armenians, thus strengthening the friendly bloc between the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf. Therefore, in addition to the above scheme, we would

⁴⁹ Ibid.

further suggest, as has already been suggested to the Colonial and Foreign Offices, the possibility of leasing from the Turks the mountain territory of the Assyrians to the North of Mosul, and the planes of Urmia to the Northeast from Persia. This leased territory would be dependent upon the Free State as a home for the original occupiers, the Assyrians, who would otherwise be living in lands not their own. The advantage of this would be that it would have the approval of both the Government, the money would be an inducement, and the conditions might prove more stable. It has also been represented strongly to the Colonial office that strong representations might be made to Persia that the Assyrians own by right of purchase during the last 30 years a large proportion of the properties in the planes of Urmia.

The above scheme is preferable to any which would place any one of these people under the domination of another, as must the case unless they are all given political equality under such a scheme as we suggest.

We believe that Persia would prefer such an international Free state rather than have Chasi Mustapha Kemal Pasha in that area. We believe also that it would have the good will of Russia as in the past she has been favourable to giving succour and shelter to the oppressed minorities. And if we eventually evacuate Mosul it would be for the safeguarding of Baghdad and India, preferable to have an international buffer State sandwiched in between us and Turkey. We also believe that it would be a test case for the League of Nations and give them a chance to prove that they are capable of dealing with such an important situation, and would also assist every subscribing Nation of the League of Nation to take a definite interest in the welfare of minorities in a practical as well as in an altruistic manner.

During his stay in America from April 1924 to August, 1925 Mar Timotheus preached to Assyrians as well as non-Assyrians. He was invited to speak at

several services of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. A sample of his programme in August 1924 gives a clue to the busy programme Mar Timotheus and his secretary Deacon Chacko had. The following programme was in Bar Harbor in the state of Maine.⁵⁰

Bar Harbor: Appointment August 3rd 1924,
Rector: Rev. Wm E. Patterson, Bar Harbor.

His Grace to speak at the morning service at 10:30 at the church. The rector to make the appeal. Cards and pamphlets to be distributed before the service. A parlor meeting a remote possibility unless some people respond and arrange it with His Grace. The best form for all parlor meetings is an informal talk by His Grace on several features of social life in India and Persia.

August 4th...rest, while the deacon is calling on a few people the names of which may be given by the rector, or who asked themselves the deacon to call.

August 5th, please take the early morning bus for North East Harbor and call on Dr. Whittaker, rector of St. Mary's church. Later you may call with him on Bishop Manning. Please ask Bp. Manning to preside at the service at Seal Harbor on August 10th and to introduce His Grace to the people. His Grace may celebrate after the English service. Make sure that this fact is announced, as some people may be anxious to see the eastern service. I advise you to carry your charcoal with you or to make your own of pinewood. While at Bar Harbor enlist the services of Rev. Father Gassauer who may be of great help in getting the money and establishing contacts.

August 6 or 7th. Please move to North East Harbor if Dr. Wittaker thinks it wise. Follow his advice as he is a devoted man of standing. Seal Harbor is only three miles from N.E. Harbor. When moving from Bar Harbor to North East Harbor please use the boat. It leaves

⁵⁰ Programme schedule of August 1924, Archives, Trichur.

at one O'clock p.m. and stops at Seal Harbor and North East Harbor. Be very careful in getting out of the boat on time, they do not wait very long. Your trunks will be carried by the boat. Dr. Whittaker will suggest the place at which to stop in N. E. Harbor.

August 10. Service and sermon at Seal Harbor provided Bp. Manning and Dr. Whittaker agree. At 9 a.m.

August 11 – 17th: rest and informal meeting of people. Possible excursion by the bus or an automobile to Bar Harbor.

August 17th: 10:30 a.m. service and sermon at St. Mary's N.E. Harbor.

6 p.m. Address at an interdenominational meeting (mostly non-conformist) purely along social lines. So called "Sunset meeting".

August 18th: 11 a.m. A parlor meeting.

August 19th: Take the early afternoon boat for Rockland. There take another boat to Boston arriving in Boston early morning

August 20th: Take the 7.30 a.m. train for Pomfret, Connecticut at the South Station. Write the rector Rev. Dr. Bigelow, Pomfret, Conn. When arriving, he will meet you at the station and entertain. You may stay in Pomfret for a few days. Celebrate and speak in church Sunday. August 24 Parlor meeting will be arranged by the rector. The rector is a most wonderful man and a scholar. So is Mrs. Bigelow.

Leave for New York or any other place you would like to stay for few days (Britain or Hartford) I shall send you or give here definite instructions as to future campaign. It may be Ridgefield. Litchfield, Sharon or Washington, Conn or Lenox, Mass for the 31st of August and 7th of September. Still uncertain.

Sermon 11 a.m. Tuxedo Park; N. Y. Full vestments. Dress before the altar. 20 minutes. The Rector Rev. Dr. Wood will make the appeal for the money.

Last week of September. A parlor meeting at Stanford, Conn. First Sunday in October. A church service in Greenwich, Conn.

Other possible date may be one at Newport, R. I. But it is doubtful.

Report in advance how many cards you have left. Wire me here (281 Fourth ave) if need be. You cannot do much without the pledge cards. Insist on people filling them out in the church or at the meeting with the exception of N. E. Harbor Church service. Send all signed cards to me. Write me in all matters referring to campaign. But refer all money matter directly to Mr. Wm. Lamkie.

But busy programmes did not mean money galore. He and his deacon had to sweat it out. They had to be aggressive. Neither Mar Timotheus nor his deacon was aware of the techniques of fund raising. The following letter instructs both of them on some techniques of fund raising based on The psychology of The Americans. Although circumstances have changed, the following letter is still instructive. In a letter dated August 6, 1924, Theodore Hanoonyan informs Mar Timotheus:⁵¹

I just have written to Mr. Chacko asking him to assume a more aggressive attitude towards the people.

May I ask you to impress this very strongly on him and ask him to follow the instructions very closely, if you can obtain from the rector list of names of persons who manifested their interest in your cause. Mr. Chacko should be made to call upon those people repeatedly, cultivate them till the result is achieved.

I am quite sure that my presence is not imperative. I have set up the field most carefully and your Grace is representing the cause so ably. All it needs is a "follow up". Please order the deacon to keep

⁵¹ Theodore Hanoonyan's Letter dated August 6, 1924.

after the rectors in a nice way. It is not necessary to talk about the money all the time. But it would be well for him to find out about the different church meeting (like ladies auxiliary, Altar guild girls, friendly society etc.) and to keep the matter before them, Mr. Chacko has charming personality and wit, which few people will fail to appreciate. Let him sell it.

I hope your Grace will find it possible to spend a good deal of time in and near Seal Harbor. Your next Sunday (August 17th) Sermon at 9 a. m. will offer to short a time to accomplish much, unless some other meeting is arranged for. I could not do it during my short stay on the island but I have opened the way. Bishop Manning has the key to the situation. "Ask and you shall be given..." This will work here as well as in spiritual matters. The American people like to be asked and persistence will win. Of course the deacon is the man who should do it. Your Grace may obtain some names. They will refuse the deacon but will not refuse your Grace.

I certainly am praying for your most complete success. Am writing to Mr. Patterson asking him for an approximate report. It may be anywhere between \$ 500.00 and two thousand dollars. Hoping that your Grace is getting the well-deserved rest, I beg to remain.

Your obedient servant in the Lord

On 1 August 1925, Mar Timotheus sailed from New York by the S. S. Stockholm. He went to Stockholm, Sweden, to attend Life & Work World Christian conference. In addition to his visit to Sweden, he spent some time in Germany where his address was In den Berken 14, Elberfeld, Rheinland, Germany. From there he wrote letters to the congregation to strengthen the Assyrian Parish he had organised in the same year.⁵² From Germany, he moved to Geneva, Switzerland.

⁵² George M. Lamsa (1892-1975) who became well known in America as the translator of Aramaic Bible into English assisted Mar Timotheus during his visit to Chicago. George Lamsa was born in Mar Bisho village where Mar Abimalek Timotheus was born 14 years earlier. Lamsa had come to USA in 1916 and became a naturalised citizen in 1923. In early years he was known as Lamsa Jindo, as the name of his father was Jindo Pasha.

He used his stay there to consult doctors and to improve his health. Constant call to duty from Trichur made him to conclude his European tour in 1926 and to return to Trichur where the congregation was anxiously waiting to receive him to the Marth Maryam Big Church, which they had obtained after the litigation which lasted 14 years (1911 to 1925)⁵³.

4.5 The Visit Of Mar Timotheus To Iraq 1927 - 1928

In 1927 Mar Timotheus made his 4th trip abroad. By this time Lady Surma, aunt of the Patriarch and Yosip Khananeesho, maternal uncle of the patriarch took a stand against Mar Timotheus and argued that Mar Timotheus was not the Regent to the Patriarch. The Rev. W.A.Wigram, the former head of the Archbishop's Assyrian Mission, tried for reconciliation. But all the attempts failed.

Mar Timotheus ordained Joseph Kellaita ⁵⁴ a priest in Mosul, contrary to the wishes of the Patriarch. The Patriarch, therefore, suspended the newly

⁵³ One of the achievements of the Metropolitan Mar Abimalek Timotheus in India was the successful conclusion of the long litigation of 1911-1925. The 'Award' proclaimed by Mr. C.W.E. Cotton, British Political Agent to Travancore-Cochin states on 18 April, 1925 was as follows, "My considered finding is that the Plaintiffs appellants have entirely failed to establish any breach of trust on the part of the defendants-respondents. The effect of this is that the decree of the Chief Court of Cochin dismissing the plaintiffs' case with costs is concurred in and re-affirmed. The defendant-respondents representing the *Yogakars* are consequently entitled to be in possession and enjoyment of the plaint Churches and connected properties in trust for the worship of God according to the faith, doctrines, practices and discipline observed by the 1st defendant, Mar Timotheus, and my award is in these terms." Original copy of the Award signed by Mr. Cotton is kept in the Documents file in the Metropolitan's Palace. Quoted directly from the original. For more detailed discussion on the litigations, see Mar Aprem, *The Chaldean Syrian Church in India*, Mar Narsai Press, Trichur, 1977, pp.117-177.

⁵⁴ Joseph Kellaita was a cousin of Mar Timotheus. This deacon had founded an Assyrian School and Press. His son married the Patriarch's mother Esther's younger sister Hanna. Still he was not on good terms with the Patriarch. Rev. Joseph Kellaita was later reconciled with the Patriarchal family and also with the brother of his daughter-in-law, Mar Yousip Khananisho Metropolitan who spoke very highly of Joseph Kellaita during his funeral in April 1952 at Mosul, Iraq. Syriac letter dated October 8, 1927, written by Mar Timotheus was translated at Mosul into English by Joseph Kellaita. Both Syriac and English are in the file. A New translation was made later by Mar Thoma Darmo also to strengthen his stand against Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun.

ordained priest. Joseph Kellaita however continued to celebrate Holy Qurbana ignoring the order of the Patriarch.

Mar Timotheus was ordered to return to his diocese in India. Mar Timotheus challenged the order and wrote a strong open letter, which he attempted to print in Syriac. But as the situation was getting dangerous for his life, Mar Timotheus had no option except to return to India for good.

In his open letter dated 8th October (Eastern) 1927 written from Mosul, Mar Timotheus quotes from the suspension letter of the Patriarch.⁵⁵

...Now Mar Timotheus dares to and encroaches on the authority of our Patriarchal See which is recognized and confirmed by the Epistles of the several patriarchs; by ordaining shamasha Yousip as a Kasheesha. This is against chapter (*Resha*) VI, Canon 8 of the Synod, We, as becomes our duty, by the word of God and our Patriarchal authority which we possess suspend shamasha Yosip from the services of priesthood i.e. *Raza* (Qurbana), Baptism and Burial...

Then Mar Timotheus argues.⁵⁶

The blessed Mar Abdeesho Metropolitan of Suva, in his "Short Collection of Synodical Canons" in article (*Meemra*) 9. *Resha* (chapter) 2, page 114 says about the election and consecration of the patriarchs and by whom and how it should be carried out. He thus quotes from the synodical Epistle of Mar Aba the Great, Catholicos and Holy Martyr....

Mar Timotheus knew canon law very well. He was aware of the fact that the hereditary succession of the Patriarch and most of the bishops was contrary to canon law. Moreover, he knew that the boy Patriarch had not yet read the canon law as much as he did. Hence, he vehemently questioned such a practice.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Open letter dated 8 October, 1927 written by Mar Timotheus, Archives, Trichur.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "Revelation of Truth" in *Voice of the East*, Vol.17, No.4, April, 1970, pp.5 -7.

In addition to the attacks on Mar Shimun and Mar Yousip Khananeesho Metropolitan, Mar Timotheus concludes his angry letter with a direct attack on Lady Surma, the aunt of the Patriarch.⁵⁸

In July 1927 when Mar Timotheus wrote to Major Horner to get permission to visit the Assyrian camps of Iraq Levies and Headquarters refused permission because Mar Timotheus had not visited Rab Khaila David De Mar Shimun (father of the Patriarch). The Headquarters's reply from the Iraq Levies stated "In face of your apparent omission, it is feared that no assistance can be given from this Headquarters for the present".⁵⁹

Thus gradually the rift between the Patriarchal household and Mar Timotheus grew. As Mar Timotheus was getting support from some Assyrians, the Patriarch thought it necessary to get him deported from Iraq. Under pressure from the Mar Shimun family the Minister of Interior of Iraq issued a letter of deportation. Mar Timotheus protested against it. In his letter to Sir H. R. C. Dobbs, High Commissioner for Iraq in Baghdad, dated December 19, 1927. Mar Timotheus threatened to report this matter direct to The League of Nations. In this letter he explained that he was not against the Patriarch. He sent a copy of the following letter to the Patriarch.⁶⁰

You will remember at my last interview that I explained my mission and my purpose in returning to Iraq and my people from my diocese in India that I was in no way going to mix up with the politics but to call a general meeting of the church to discuss the present situation of its affairs and if necessary to officially resign my position as patriarchate regent according to the official document in my position signed by the chief Bishops, Surma Khanam, members of the Patriarchal House.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of Memorandum received from the

⁵⁸ Ibid. p.7.

⁵⁹ Reply from the Headquarters of the Iraq Levies to Mar Timotheus, Archives, Trichur.

⁶⁰ Letter of Mar Timotheus to Sir. H.R.C. Dobbs dated December 19, 1927.

Police Commandant, Mosul, during your absence which I feel is not in accordance with the religious law of the mandate. Besides its accusation is without foundation or evidence neither have had an opportunity to defend myself.

For our last conversation I know you are aware of Surma Khanam's Assyrian politics. Capt. Jardine and his successor refuse to see me on this question and the Minister of Interior could not account for the above stated memorandum being sent to me. Thus I explained to the latter that there was but one course to take and that is to report direct to the League of Nations that there is no religious toleration at present in Iraq by broadcasting my experience to the world. I have since heard that you have returned and I am sure you will not allow me to leave for Europe without some explanation or at least have this insult withdrawn and the affair, properly examined. I would be if a meeting of the Nestorian Church could be called under your auspices so that I can fulfil my mission. I assure you that I am not against the Patriarch: On the contrary I wish to give him back the position under pressure reluctantly undertook viz. to head up the minority of the boy Patriarch and the Nestorian Church in India. I trust you will kindly consider this matter and let me know what you would like me to do. I delay leaving only for this purpose.

I have the honour to remain,

Your Excellency's Most obedient servant.

On January 29, 1928 Mar Timotheus met the Minister of Interior of Iraq at Baghdad and demanded the cancellation of the deportation order, the Minister informed him that the High Commissioner Sir Henry Dobbs had requested him to withdraw deportation order. On January 30, Mar Timotheus wrote to the Minister requesting for a written document to that effect.⁶¹

⁶¹ Letter of Mar Timotheus dated 30 January 1928 addressed to the Minister of Interior.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your interview of the 29th and for the information that His Excellency the High Commissioner has requested you to withdraw the Police order for my deportation, which your predecessor issued on the evidence of people who lie to prevent me carrying out my duty to my church.

This Police order was issued to me in writing. Therefore I kindly request before proceeding further, to have a copy of the order which cancels it. Otherwise I am not sure where I stand in the future if similar attacks are made on my person.

Thanking your Excellency for your courtesy towards me.

Believe me.

Yours obediently,

On the same date, Mar Timotheus wrote to the High Commissioner Sir Henry Dobbs thanking him for his kindness for requesting the Minister of Interior to cancel the deportation order.⁶²

Thus Mar Timotheus returned to India without the humiliating experience of being deported. But no doubt this unhappy experience must have created wounds, which are not easy to be healed. Since he never returned to Iraq he did not have to face any trouble from the Iraq officials or from the Patriarchal family.

After writing this letter, Mar Timotheus returned to India in April 1928. He never visited Iraq after his fourth trip. This great Assyrian Champion could have rendered yeomen service for the cause of the Assyrians during his remaining 17 years which he spent in India.⁶³ Though away from his native Assyrian people, he did not forget them.

⁶² Letter of Mar Timotheus dated 30 January 1928 addressed to Sir Henry Dobbs.

⁶³ When Mar Timotheus returned from Iraq for good he was only 49 years and 7 months old. He was not an old man even by the standard of his generation. But his bitter experience kept him away from his own Assyrian people till his end at the age of 67.

The Assyrian Press, Mosul belonging to Rev. Joseph de Kelaitha was given to Quasha Hanna of Tkhuma. He took it to Hassake, Syria where it is used even now.

4.6 The Assyrian Settlement In Iraq⁶⁴

The anonymous author of the book *The Assyrian Tragedy* divides the settlements of the Assyrians in Iraq into the following three periods.⁶⁵

The First period 1920-1925

The Second Period 1925-32

The Third Period 1932-33

The Assyrians decided to remain in Iraq with a hope of being settled down in their homeland in Hakkari. As the British Government was slow in settling the Assyrians in their traditional land of Hakkari, the two Assyrian tribes began to settle in their homeland of Hakkari in 1919. But partly due to bad weather and due to lack of organization the scheme did not succeed. In 1920 two Assyrian tribes of Tyari and Tkhuma returned to Hakkari on their own to settle down in their homeland. In 1921 Captain McNearnie and other British officers visited these Assyrians which aroused Turkish animosity.

Due to the overwhelming Turkish regular force the Assyrians were compelled to retire to Iraq and their hope of peaceful living in their ancestral homes was lost. The Sir Percy Cox negotiations in 1924, which was initiated by the British Government for a re-settlement of Assyrians also, failed and refused by the Turks.

⁶⁴ This section contains the jist of Chapters V - VIII of the book, *The Assyrian Tragedy*, Annemesse (USA), 1934.

⁶⁵ The Assyrian Publisher who reprinted this book argues that Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun was the author of this book. The present writer does not think so. The young patriarch who was only 26 years old and was in exile could not find time to write such a book. One of his admireres or advisers must have been the author of this book which gives a lot of information on the dark period in the history of the Assyrians.

The British Government and certain politicians blame the League of Nations for having allowed this Turkish retainment of Hakkari. Again British Authorities put forth a new settlement scheme which is known as “the Z Plan”, with the aim of planting Assyrians throughout Kurdistan. By this scheme many parts of Kurdistan were garrisoned by Assyrian levies. Nevertheless, the effects of “the Z plan” were disastrous to the Assyrians due to Malaria and poverty.

In the third period (1932 -33), Major D.B. Thomson arrived in Iraq in June 1933 to settle the Assyrians in accordance with a resolution of the League of Nations. But the Iraq government, as was anticipated, employed methods to cause dissension among the Assyrians. Recognized Assyrian leaders were ignored and replaced by unpopular individuals. Coercive measures became acute and normal life was made desperate.

Only 150 families were accommodated by Thomson’s plan, while the Assyrian population was around 37,000 in Iraq. At last they suggested Assyrians to absorb with the body politic of Iraq, which means in practice they are homeless, must forget their language, traditions, customs, and unity.

The Assyrians in order to preserve the existence as an entity, as by tradition, recognized their Patriarch as the Supreme Head of the Millet (Nation). But, though the Patriarch was not practicing Temporal Power (except one occasion). Major W.C.F.A. Wilson, administrative Inspector, Mousul wrote to Baghdad on 10th May, 1933 with the intention of breaking the influence of the Patriarchal family, suppression of his temporal power and to “detain and take under control” Lady Surma and Captain Yaku, who were the sources of a “strong anti-government propaganda amongst the Kurdish tribes.”⁶⁶

The Patriarch thereafter was taken to Baghdad under false pretences and asked to sign a document that he would not obstruct the task of Major D.B. Thomson and being assured once again his loyalty to the King. However, these illegal detention and mal-treatment of the Patriarch added to the list of cases of oppression.

⁶⁶ *The Assyrian Tragedy.*, op. cit., p.43.

Major Thomson's scheme of Assyrian settlement was a complete failure. The meeting of July 10th gathered by the Government, in which the speeches of Mutasarrif, Col. R.S. Stafford and Major Thomson blasted the last hope of the Assyrians regarding their settlement in Iraq. In one way or other, they were compelled to leave Iraq. Their nationality was totally questioned. The attitudes of the neighbour countries like Turkey, Persia and Syria were not in favour to them. When they made their own arrangements to find a new home, diplomatic pressures and force of arms stopped them.

It was very clear in the minds of Assyrians that they were not wanted in Iraq and the only door open to them, under the circumstance, was Syria.

On the night of 14-15 July, 1933 the first Assyrian group left Iraq and reached Syrian frontier. As the consequences of their letter of July 23rd to the Minister of Interior at Baghdad, the Iraq government mobilized its army and began harassing the Assyrians. With the view to disarm the Assyrians and return them to Iraq, the Anglo-French discussions in Paris and the Franco-Iraqi negotiations took place. The situation of the Assyrians, those in Iraq, became alarming.

4.7 The Assyrian Massacre, August 1933

As a preparation to Assyrian Massacre the Iraqi Ministers and High Officials removed their head quarters from Baghdad to Mosul. Inflammatory speeches were made in both parliament and senate, as if supporting a Holy War. On June 29th, 1933 the Patriarch protested to 12 foreign Embassies including that of Great Britain. But it was suppressed.

Finally, the Assyrians were attacked on the way to Syria by the Iraq Army while crossing river Faishkhabour,⁶⁷ the Frontier River which divides Syria and Iraq. Iraq Army ignored their signals of surrender in the form of white flags and started intense fire. Under the circumstances, retaliation was the only remedy. They were led by their respective chiefs namely, Yaku,

⁶⁷ Now the Assyrians in Syria live on the banks of the Khabour River.

Shlaimun Malik Ismail, Malik Loko, David of Tkhuma and others. The fight lasted all the night of 4-5 August and the Iraq government falsely accused the Assyrians and further arouses Arab fanaticism.

The remarks of Rev. Dr. John B. Panfil's testimony describe the original plight of Assyrians. After a vivid analysis of the situation of the Assyrians he says, "the Assyrians know now that the government does not want them and that the general public hates them".⁶⁸

By this time Bakr Sidqy, the Arab area Commandant, Mosul had planned the massacre for the month of May 1933. On May 7th a 'stone case' was accused by an Arab Officer against the Patriarchal House and later extended to other Assyrians. But the Commission of Enquiry found out the falsehood of the accusation.

Almost all the Assyrians in the police force were removed from Mosul to the south of Iraq. After the battle of the 4-5th August, the Iraq Army returned to Mosul and right through its way began a systematic massacre, which commenced on August 7th, when Qaimaqam Zakho Ahmad al Dibuni tortured to death 46 Assyrians while the Iraq Army executed any Assyrian that met on its way back.

The wholesale massacre was officially inaugurated on 11th of August. The massacre zone was 15-30 miles from Mosul, which is linked up with telephone, telegraph and by other means of communication. Arab and certain Kurds were armed by the government and offered one pound for every Assyrian head.

The Simel massacre was arranged as follows, which gives a better knowledge of the atrocities.⁶⁹

Under the pretext of giving police protection to the Assyrians, the inhabitants of eleven villages in the vicinity of Simel (the larger Assyrian village whose police post was beforehand reinforced) were

⁶⁸ *The Assyrian Tragedy.*, op. cit., p 51.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.53.

summoned to the latter place for shelter from the tribesmen government had armed. Men, women and children hurried to the place of protection. After assuring them of the 'good intentions' of the government, they were disarmed by the police authorities under instructions of Makki Sharbatti Qaimaqam of Dohuk. The inoffensive population was indiscriminately massacred, men, women and children alike, with rifle, revolver and machine gun fire. In one room alone, *eighty-one* men from the Baz tribe, who had taken shelter with the named Goriyyil, were barbarously massacred. Priests were tortured and their bodies mutilated. Those who showed their *Iraqi nationality* papers were the first to be shot. Girls were raped and women violated and made to march naked before the Arab army commander. Holy books were used as fuel for burning girls. Children were run over by military cars. Pregnant women were bayoneted. Children were flung in the air and pierced on to the points of bayonets. Those who survived in the other villages were now exposed day and night to constant raids and acts of violence forced conversion to Islam of men and women was the next process. Refusal was met with death.

In short, 65 out of 95 Assyrian villages and settlements were either sacked, looted, destroyed or burnt to the ground. In Dohuk under the orders of the Arab Qaimaqam alone 500 Assyrians were killed. Many Assyrians were dismissed from the British Employment and the British authorities afforded no relief. The only thing the Royal Air Force did was to take photographs from air of scenes of horror.

The Archbishop of Canterbury on Nov. 28th in the House of Lords said regarding the massacre that, "I have seen accounts of those who were present. I have heard that it was more shocking than anything it was seen during the war.... Such an exhibition of savage fanaticism has probably seldom been seen."⁷⁰ Mr. Ernest Main, the Daily Mail representative to Iraq also told in his speech at the Royal Central Asian Society that, "the Assyrians massacred during August 1933 were 3.000."⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.55.

⁷¹ Ibid.

These atrocities also had been proved and supported by the reports of two famous Presbyterian American Missionaries named Mr. Badeau and Mr. R.C. Cumberland. In the words of R.C. Cumberland, on 26th August 1933.⁷²

The massacre at Semeil is known to you ... having been told to come in from the surrounding villages for protection. They were all without arms, and were shot down in cold blood by the Army. Such an exhibition of stark savagery and frenzied fanaticism has seldom been seen. The objective fact remains that corruption is the rule rather than the exception in the country, and that it is not condemned by anybody of public opinion that is strong enough to check it.

Also he further adds and explains the plight of the Assyrians.⁷³

What course Government will take, I cannot forecast. I am sorry that for the present they have chosen to deny the facts of the Semeil massacre; it does no good. One of the most discouraging features of the situation is the strong feeling, especially in Mosul, against all Assyrians, whether loyal to government or not. Many Assyrians, employed in all kinds of work are being dismissed these days, for no reason other than that they are Assyrians.

At Semeil was proved what fanatical Islam and irresponsible government are capable of, and it will not soon be forgotten... I should not doubt that a wise solution would be reached. But this will go to London and Geneva, where there cannot be such a background of understanding, and where France will have a hand in it, on account of the connection with Syria. I have a profound distrust of French colonial policy. In spite of Iraqi denials, the main features of the facts will be known, and they cannot be entirely overlooked. Protests ought to be made. But I do not think that armed intervention would have a reaction in this country opposite to that desired, un-

⁷² Ibid., p.60.

⁷³ Ibid., p.61.

less the League or some country appointed by it is ready to step in and establish a complete foreign administration.

The Minutes of the fourth Meeting of the League of Nations, 77th session, held on Saturday October 14th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m. under the presidentship of M. Amador of Panama. M. de Madriaga of Spain made the final proposal. Secretary General was M. Avenol. These minutes (copy) are preserved in the Douglas Papers at the Lambeth Palace Library. London.⁷⁴

The Iraqi Government did not wish to conceal that excesses had been committed; it deplored the no less sincerely than the Governments represented on the Council. All the available police forces had been concentrated on the task of restoring order. A beginning had been made without delay, as the Council had already been informed, to do the best to make amends to the sufferers and care for the dependents, even of the guilty. The Iraqi Government was determined to have nothing undone to ensure that there should be no repetition of those unfortunate events.⁷⁵

The excess committed by certain Assyrian tribes against the Kurds in 1919, when an attempt to repatriate them had degenerated into a looting and raping expedition, the riots in Mosul town in 1923, and the incidents in Kirkuk in May 1924, when two companies of the Assyrian Levy had run amok and killed fifty of the townspeople, including women and children, had left bitter memories. The unconstitutional ambitions of the disloyal leaders had already alarmed the politically minded classes. Those leaders, for their part, had never concealed their antipathy for what they called an Arab Moslem Government, and had never ceased to endeavour to sow distrust in the minds of the Assyrians generally.

4. The Government of Iraq has expressed its conviction that the contingency contemplated in the resolution of Dec 15th, 1932, to

⁷⁴ Douglas Papers at Lambeth, copied by the present writer in microfilm preserved in *CD ROM No.291* at the Metropolitan Palace in Trichur, India.

⁷⁵ *Ibid. CD ROM No.300.*

which I have just referred, have now risen. It has declared itself willing to contribute as generously as its own resources permit to felicitate the settlement elsewhere than in Iraq of the Assyrians who wish to leave it. It has, however, asked the assistance of the League in finding lands on which they could be settled.

The committee, when it met in Paris on August 31st had had before it, not only the Mar Shimun's petition, but also documents of three kinds received from private sources (Press cuttings etc.) which, far from contributing any new light, had only increased the confusion and made it very difficult to assess the blame.

The events of August had aroused wide interest throughout the world. After the Paris meeting, which had been given publicity everywhere, he had received numerous letters, Press cuttings and requests for interviews.

The report was adopted. As desired by M de Madariaga a committee of the following five countries was appointed. United Kingdom, France, Italy, Denmark and Mexico.

The League of Nations could not do much for the Assyrians as we see in the next chapter.

**THE PERIOD OF SUFFERINGS 1933 - 1975
FROM THE PERIOD OF EXILE OF
PATRIARCH MAR ESHAI SHIMUN IN
CYPRUS TILL HIS ASSASSINATION ON
6TH NOVEMBER 1975**

CHAPTER V

5.1 Exile Of The Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun To Cyprus, 1933

The massacre in Simale in August 1933 was a terrible shock and loss to the Assyrians. Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun, who was only 25 years old, was ordered out of Iraq. The young Patriarch refused to leave Iraq. Squadron Leader G.S Reed who was a teacher of English in Kochanes in Archbishop's Assyrian Mission flew in and put pressure on Mar Shimun and took him to Cyprus.¹ Mr. George S. Reed was a lay member in the staff of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission till the First World War.

The Patriarch's father David, mother Esther, aunt Surma, and brothers Theodore and Sargon and younger sisters moved to Cyprus. Later the patriarchal household was shifted to Ealing near London, England in August 1954. In 1940 the Patriarch moved to America. He stayed in Chicago and in 1956 moved to California.

The Church in India was not in much contact with the Patriarch. The events in 1928 forced Mar Abimalek Timotheus to return.² The relation between Mar Timotheus and Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun became strained. Even in the Indian church there were internal issues, although the civil suits ended in April 1925 with the award of Mr. C. W. E. Cotton.

In America the Assyrians began to get organized. Back in 1925 Mar Abimalek Timotheus and his secretary Deacon C.J. Chacko had worked hard to establish a parish in Chicago.

Sadok de Mar Shimun became the priest of the parish in Chicago around 1940. He belonged to the family of Nimrod, (cousin of the Patriarch)³ who

¹ Squadron Leader George S. Reed narrated the event of 1933 when the present writer met him in England in 1962.

² Discussed in detail in Chapter IV of this dissertation.

³ Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun (1903 - 1918).

was killed in 1914. Some Assyrians feel that Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun was responsible for the murder of the family of Nimrod.⁴

Rev. Sadok de Mar Shimun became an enemy of the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun. It led to civil suits to wrest the church property from Rev. Sadok de Mar Shimun. It did not happen however. Rev. Sadok de Mar Shimun continued to hold that congregation under him till his death. After the death of Rev. Sadok, St. John's Church in Chicago came under Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in 1986.

In 1954 after the IIInd World War was over the Patriarchal family (Mar Eshai Shimun's father David, mother Esther, father's sister lady Surma, sisters of the Patriarch (Helen, Rowena, Sargina, Wardiya) etc., moved to England (after 21 years in Cyprus). They settled down in 27 St. Stephen's Avenue, Ealing, London W.13. They stayed there for some years till they moved to California.⁵

The Assyrian settlement on the banks of Khabour River in 1945 was under the leadership of Malik Yacob Ismael of the Upper Tyari tribe. Deacon Mansour Elisha Darmo⁶ who was ordained in the Baquba Refugee camp in May 1921 by Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan was one of those who left Iraq and settled down on the Khabour river. The Assyrians settled down on the Khahour river tribe by tribe. The Assyrian community in Syria had grown as a diocese and their Cathedral is in Hassake.⁷

⁴ Nimrod was negotiating with the Catholic Chaldeans.

⁵ The exact date of the shifting of the Patriarchal family from England to the USA is not known. It is around 1960.

⁶ Later Thoma Darmo Metropolitan. Cf. Mar Aprem, *Mar Thoma Darmo : A biography*, Mar Narsai Press, Trichur, 1974,

⁷ Mar Yohannan Avraham was consecrated as Episcopa for Syria in 1968 by Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun. He died in 1985. For 14 years the administration of Syria was looked after by Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon. On 11 October 1999, Mar Aprim Athniel was consecrated as the Episcopa of Syria in Hassake by the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Khanania Dinkha IV. Prior to his consecration the new bishop spent 5 years at the Roman Catholic Seminary of the St. Mary of the Lake at Mundelein near Chicago.

5.2 Death Of Mar Timotheus And Aftermath, 1945

On 30th April 1945 Mar Timotheus, Metropolitan of India passed away. The Indian Church did not know where the Patriarch was. They sent telegram to the Archbishop of Canterbury in England requesting him to inform Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun who was somewhere in the U.S.A.

For seven years there was no bishop in India. The dissensions within the Indian Church were a grave concern to the Patriarch. Rev. Poulouse Konikara who was chosen unanimously as the Administrator of the Church in India passed away on 5 June 1949. The next senior priest Rev. Antony Chitalan was not acceptable to any of the two factions in the Church as the next Administrator.⁸ The next senior priest was Rev. Antony Chackola. But the junior most priest Rev. P.T. Yohannan was acceptable to that faction. Many wanted him to be made a bishop as he was a celibate priest and knew Syriac language well enough to correspond with the religious leaders in The Middle East.

The other faction led by Mr. O.T. Inasu had the support of the most of the clergy under the leadership of Rev. Francis Mannukadan who was a Church historian and headmaster of the Chaldean Syrian School before it had become a high School. This faction opposed the moves of the first group of Rev. Antony Chackola⁹ and Rev. P.T. Yohannan under the leadership of Mr. M.O. Thomakutty the only surviving Trustee of the four Trustees of the Church. Of the four trustees at the time of the death of Mar Abimalek Timotheus Mr. N.O. Inasu joined the Roman Catholic Church. Mr. C.L. Vareed resigned. Mr. Chandy Francis died leaving Mr. M.O. Thomakutty the sole Trustee. The two divisions continued until Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan took charge at Trichur in June 1952.

Under the leadership of Mar Thoma Darmo the Indian Church got a consti-

⁸ The two factions in the Church of the East in India were not based on the Universal Assyrian Church. It was a local issue.

⁹ Fr. Antony Chackola was the Administrator of the Church of the East in India during 1927-28 when Mar Abimalek Timotheus was in Iraq.

tution.¹⁰ New priests were ordained and parishes were re-organized. A Seminary was established. Several new churches, priests' quarters etc were built.¹¹ The Hudra, the prayer book of 4000 pages in Syriac in 3 volumes, was printed at the Mar Narsai Press in 1960 -62.

Difference of opinion developed between Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan and the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun who consecrated him. The Metropolitan wrote many articles in the modern Assyrian language and published in *Voice of the East*, Syriac – English bilingual monthly.¹²

Some Assyrians such as Malik Loco Badawi of Thkuma tribe, Bishop Isho Sargis Episcopa of Jelu tribe, Rev. Sadok de Mar Shimun of Chicago and others started correspondence with Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan and used him as a weapon to fight Patriarch Mar Shimun. Many leaflets were printed in Assyrian, English and Malayalam attacking the Patriarch. The hereditary succession of the episcopal families especially that of the Patriarch was vehemently opposed by Mar Thoma Darmo.

On 10th January 1964 the Patriarch suspended Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan. The majority of the clergy and the laity of the Indian Church supported the Metropolitan and refused to recognize the suspension order. It led to civil suits in India.¹³

The adoption of the western calendar was under consideration for some

¹⁰ Printed in Malayalam at Mar Narsai Press, Trichur, 1954.

¹¹ In the Church in Trichur since its construction in 1814 AD there was no married priest. Hence there were only single rooms for priests to live in the Church premises. But during the time of Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan the clergy in Trichur wanted to marry. The people opposed the idea as the Roman Catholic priests were celibates. Mar Timotheus explained to the people that he himself was the son of a priest and most priests outside India were married. Only after the arrival of Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan in 1952 and the parishes were organized the need was felt for the clergy to reside in their respective parishes. Hence parsonages were built in many parishes.

¹² *Voice of the East* is the official publication of the Church of the East in India since 1954, published at Mar Narsai Press, Trichur.

¹³ For details of the civil suits cf. Mar Aprem, *Mar Thoma Darmo : A Biography*, op.cit., pp. 89 - 99.

time. In India the Syrian Orthodox Church, Mar Thoma Syrian Church and the Independent Syrian Church of Malabar adopted in 1954 the Gregorian calendar like the Catholics and Protestants. The Church of the East too wanted to change, as it was difficult to get holidays for those who observed the festival days of old Julian calendar.

As the British ruled India until 15 August 1947 the Gregorian Calendar followed by the English was the only acceptable religious calendar for Christians. The Patriarch changed the calendar to the Gregorian reckoning in 1964 hoping that the majority of the faithful would support him. It didn't happen as expected.

The people in Iraq and Syria took up the old calendar issue. Those who supported Mar Thoma Darmo in his stand against hereditary succession opposed the Patriarch's move to adopt the new calendar.

The "suspension" issue was forgotten. The new calendar people were opposed by the supporters of Mar Thoma Darmo. The old calendar faction brought Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan to Baghdad on 7 September 1968. The Assyrians in Iraq organized themselves under Colonel Joseph Khoshaba, son of Malik Khoshaba of the Lower Tyari tribe. The people who had left the Church of the East to become Presbyterians and others returned to the old faith and organized themselves under Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan.

There were no prelates to support Mar Thoma Darmo. Mar Esho Sargis, Bishop of Jelu who had opposed Mar Shimun earlier and persuaded Mar Thoma Darmo to revolt, died in December 1966. The new bishop Mar Yosip Sargis consecrated in 1968, was only a teenager.¹⁴ He did not support Mar Thoma Darmo. But some Assyrians from the Jelu tribe supported Mar Thoma Darmo.

¹⁴ Mar Yosip Sargis was consecrated bishop by Mar Yosip Khananeesho Metropolitan at Mar Zaia Cathedral in Baghdad, Iraq.

5.3 The Church In Iran

The Church in Iran was without any Bishop after the First World War.¹⁵ The missionary activities in Iran had ended. The Persian government prohibited in 1928 the Bible in the schools. The Persian government took over all schools in the forties. In 1934 the government of Iran asked all the “foreigners” to evacuate Azerbaijan.

The American Presbyterian Board of Missions ended their missionary activities 100 years after it had begun in Urmiah. The missionaries asked the local Christians to be loyal citizens of Persia.

There were Assyrians living both in Iraq and Iran even after the exile of Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun to Cyprus in 1933.

In 1940 the Church in Iran sent Ruvel Arsanis to India to be ordained a priest, as there was no bishop in Iran. Mar Abimalek Timotheus, Metropolitan of India ordained Ruvel Arsanis deacon and then to the rank of the Qashisha. The new priest had to rush to Iran as the Second World War had begun.

The Assyrians were living in comparative peace when the Second World War began in 1939. But in 1941 the Allied Forces decided to occupy Iran. The northern provinces of Iran were incorporated within Russia’s security zone. Thus the Russian troops controlled the area.

In 1942 the Soviet Union and Great Britain in the ‘Tripartite Treaty’ guaranteed the territorial integrity and the political independence of Iran. The Allied forces agreed to leave Iran within six months after the end of the war. But revolt took place in Tabriz, the capital of Azerbaijan. Thus a “National Government of Persian Azerbaijan” was established.¹⁶ In April 1946 it

¹⁵ The last bishop of Iran was Mar Dinkha Episcopa of Urmia who was shot dead in Feb. 1915, as mentioned in the letter of Rev. Y.M. Neesan dated 27 Feb., 1915, quoted from Yosip Yacoob, *The Assyrian Question*, Chicago, Alpha Graphics, 1986, p.65.

¹⁶ John Joseph., op. cit., p.210.

was announced that a “twenty year’s treaty” has been concluded. According to the preamble of the treaty the Azerbaijanis and the Kurdish nations had been persecuted by the Central Government under Reza Shah for 20 years.¹⁷

Dr. John Joseph observes:¹⁸

A manifesto, signed by Qazi Muhammad and 105 leading Kurds, stated that the Kurdish people wished nothing but the human and constitutional rights denied them by the former Shah. The Kurdish Democratic Party, the manifesto declared, will make a special effort to establish unity and complete fraternity with the Azerbaijani people and the other peoples that live in Azerbaijan, namely the Assyrians and Armenians.

On 6 May 1946 the Russians agreed to withdraw. John Joseph thinks that the Russians agreed to withdraw on condition that the oil fields in northern Iran would be under the control of a Russianised company,

The Assyrians were persecuted badly. Several Assyrian villages were stripped bare. The Assyrians were looted and killed. About the exodus of Assyrians from Iran John Joseph remarks:¹⁹

The precarious situation in their home province finally forced most of the able-bodied Assyrians to desert their ancestral villages in Urmiyah permanently and to join their relatives and friends in the major cities of Iran. In these urban centers, where many a prejudice has been dispelled, the community lives in greater economic and political security. The young generation especially has come to share the enthusiasm of the rest of the youth for the betterment of their country.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.211.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 213.

During the World War II (1939-45) the League of Nations ceased to exist. On May 7, 1945 representatives of many countries gathered in San Francisco and gave birth to the United Nations. The Assyrians sought to find justice to their National Question, which has been under the consideration of the League of Nations during 1919-1937. Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun submitted a memorandum by himself along with Mr. Joseph Durna and with Mr. Samuel Aslan. In this Memorandum Mar Eshai Shimun recalls:

On August 18th, 1933, I was denationalised without trial and deported from Iraq to the Island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean.

On May 17, 1946 the Patriarch wrote to the Secretary General of the United Nations regarding the persecutions faced by the Assyrians in Rezaieh area in Iran. On March 13, 1947 he submitted a petition to the UN Secretary General. In this petition the Patriarch lists the atrocities committed on his people in Iran. Some excerpts.²⁰

The town of Charbakha, a prosperous Assyrian community, was looted on Dec 17th. The looters told the Assyrians ‘Don’t be afraid, we have no orders to kill –only to loot.’ Everything the Assyrians possessed, even the clothes upon their backs, were taken away.

...

“In the town of Adda, both of the arms of one Assyrian Christian, named Charles, were cut publicly; he was then burned to death by means of kerosene.

In the town of Mushawa, Eramyah’s both eyes were dug out while alive and tortured to death.

In the town of Khananishu, Abraham’s fingers (both hands) were cut off and then forced to eat them in the presence of his parents.”

The Patriarch Mar Shimun concludes his petition to the United Nations with the following plea.²¹

²⁰ Mar Eshai Shimun., *Light From The East*, Vol.5, No.2, published in February - March 1952. p.2.

²¹ Mar Eshai Shimun’s Petition dated March 11, 1947, Archives, Trichur.

The United Nations through its charter is dedicated to this very principle. The small Assyrian Nation once again appeals to the great United Nations, asking for no more than the fulfilment of that principle, the justice that is indivisible.

Dr.J.F. Coakley of Harvard, USA who has studied the Assyrian church very closely observes that in 1948 Patriarch Eshai Shimun took a conciliatory attitude. He writes in his article “Church of the East since 1914” in the Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Vol 78, Number 3 Autumn 1996:²²

The year 1948, however, marked a change in the Patriarch's official policy and accordingly a turning-point in the history of the Church of the East. In Dec 1946 - February 1947 there were reports of attacks on Assyrian villages and civilians by troops in Iranian Azerbaijan. An appeal to the United States State Department for a protest to be made to Iran was signed by about seventy episcopalian bishops, evidently at the instigation of Mar Shimun and a helpful friend Irwin St.John Tucker, the pastor of St.Stephen's Episcopal church in Chicago.

The State Department gave no satisfaction to the bishops, but Mar Shimun must have thought the Episcopal response to the plight of the Assyrians was encouraging. In April 1948 he drafted a grand appeal addressed to the Christian people of America, citing this time the famine conditions among the Assyrians in Syria. The Patriarch asked for \$250,000 for immediate needs; “They look to me, their patriarch and civil head, and I am helpless save for your good will.”

Coakley comments that after this “appeal failed embarrassingly” and “the chronic failure of appeals to the west over the Patriarch's lifetime” the Patriarchal Council produced a new policy. In the newly started Light from the East magazine the patriarch wrote :²³

²² J.F. Coakley., *Bulletin of John Rylands Library*, Manchester, Vol. 78, No.3, 1996, p.186

²³ Mar Eshai Shimun., *op. cit.*, p.187.

It is our earnest prayer to Almighty God that a brighter future may dawn for the Assyrians in the Middle East, where they can live as loyal subjects and citizens of the various countries, contributing their best as peace-loving Christian citizens, and receiving in return justice, freedom and equality of opportunities, from their respective governments.

The Church in Iran was without a bishop. In 1953 Qasha Philipose of Diana, Iraq was consecrated to be bishop of Iran, as there was no bishop in that country. But he did not get visa to go there and so remained in Iraq till his death.²⁴

Rev. Ruwel Arsanis, ordained in India by Mar Timotheus Metropolitan, gave leadership to the Church in Iran since 1940 which had no bishops. There was a shortage of clergy as there was no bishop in Iran to conduct ordinations.

In 1951 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun gave permission for our clergy in Iran to be ordained by Mar Yohannan, an Assyrian bishop consecrated in the Rumanian Orthodox Church. Rev. Ruwil Arsanis gave a short course for some people. Mr. Samuel Kelaita, Visitor General, assisted.²⁵

On 6 August 1951 on the festival of Gilyana (transfiguration) the following three priests and three deacons were ordained.

1. Qasisha Pere bar Yonan Karam from Chamakiye, near Urmiah for the Church of Marth Mariyam.
2. Qashisha Shyomel bar Yosip beth Kulya of Gugtapa to be priest of Mar Zaya, Gugtapa.
3. Qashisha Giwargis bar Mikhail, of the village of Chira Cherai, of Diz in Kurdistan to be priest in Abadan.

²⁴ The enemies of the Patriarch brought it as a charge against him.

²⁵ *Light From The East*, op. cit. Vol.4, No.5, p.2

4. Haidon Bawad of Chira Charai, Diz to be deacon for Teheran.
5. Simon Mar Yosip, of the village of Khajig of Berwar (Qudshanis) to be deacon in Teheran.
6. Eshai bar Yonan Rando of Alsan Jilu to be deacon in Teheran.

This ordination of three priests and three deacons was a great help to solve the shortage of clergy in the Church in Iran.

In 1952 *Light From the East* magazine, Chicago, published a “Raziah (URMI) Issue” in February – March, Vol. 5, No. 2. Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun refers to the visit of Mr. Samuel D’beth Kelaita who visited Rezaiah in Northern Iran in 1951 (The report is dated 1951 Kanon Kdeem 28 of the Easterners. It could be December 28, 1951 or rather January 10, 1952, as the Church of the East was following only the Julian Calendar till 1964. The Patriarch writes :²⁶

The importance of this trip lies in the fact that it is the first time in last thirty four years, that a representative of the Patriarch has visited Riziah, and that we have received first hand information regarding the situation of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East in that historic part of Iran.

“Thirty four years” refers to us back to 1917 AD or 1918 AD. Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun was shot in Salamas near Rizaiah (Urmia) in March 1918. Bishop Mar Dinkha of Urmia had been shot in February 1915, i.e. 36 years prior to the visit of Mr. Shmouel Kellaita.

The Patriarch appealed to the members of the Church of the East along with the sons of the Assyrian nation living in the various countries of the world, to help for the establishment of fifteen and eventually thirty village schools in which Syriac will be taught, along with the faith of the Holy Apostolic Church of our forefathers.

²⁶ Ibid. Vol.5, No.2, p.1

Qasha Khanania, son of Andrious and grandson of Rev. Banyamin (born on 15 September 1935) was sent to Iran in 1958 by Mar Yosip Khananishu Metropolitan. Qasha Khanania was a priest worthy enough to be a bishop. The young priest worked actively to start schools and establish churches. Patriarch Mar Shimun who was returning from India consecrated Qasha Khanania, as bishop of Iran on 11th February 1962. The new bishop was only 26 years and 5 months old.

The young bishop worked very actively to train and ordain clergy. So at the resignation of Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun in 1973, Mar Dinkha was one of the three bishops chosen to manage the affairs of the Church universal when Mar Yosip Khananishu, the senior Metropolitan was the acting Patriarch.

5.4 The Split Of 1968

The government of General Ahmad el Bakr of the Baath party that newly had come to power in Iraq on 17 July, 1968 captured some churches including the Mar Zaya Cathedral at Karrade Mariam in Baghdad. They were forcibly taken by the police and handed over to Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan.²⁷

In this split leadership was taken by Col. Yosip de Malik Khoshaba (1914-2000)²⁸ who was opposed to the family of Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun. Col. Yosip was a member of the Presbyterian Church. There were other

²⁷ Mar Thoma Darmo was encouraged to go to Iraq and start a rival Patriarchate by some Assyrians who were opposed to Mar Eshai Shimun. Prominent among them were Col. Joseph Khoshaba, son of Malik Koshaba of Lower Tyari (1914-2000) and Malik Loco Badawi (1902-1977). During 1948-50 Malik Loco Badawi had gone to Brazil along with Malik Daniel of Upper Tyari to settle Assyrians there. The mission failed. Loco Badawi felt that Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun did not support them. He worked against Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun. In 1967 he left Syria and settled in Lebanon. In 1972 he migrated to USA and died in Chicago on May 20, 1977.

²⁸ His grandfather Malik Patto (Pathrose) of Lower Tyari was a brave man. He fought against Bedr Khan Beg of Botan in 1843. Malik Patto's family ruled Lower Tyari for 600 years. Malik Patto succeeded in bringing back Patriarch Mar Abraham Shimun to Hakkiari after the attacks of Bedr Khan Beg.

Assyrians who had left the leadership of Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun and his representative in Iraq, Mar Yosip Khananisho Metropolitan, got together in supporting Mar Thoma Darmo to overthrow the 600 years hereditary rule of Mar Shimun family.

On 13 September 1968 Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan of India, who had come from India on 7 September, consecrated Rev. K.A. Paul, an Indian priest, as Mar Poulouse Episcopa. On 21 September Mar Thoma Darmo consecrated Rev. George Mookan another Indian priest as Mar Aprem and on 22nd September 1968 Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan and Mar Aprem Episcopa consecrated Archdeacon Shleemon Geevarghese as Mar Addai Episcopa and Metropolitan of Iraq. On 29 September 1968 Mar Aprem Episcopa was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan. On 10th October Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan was consecrated Patriarch by Mar Addai Metropolitan and Mar Aprem Metropolitan.

The split of the Church of the East was complete. The Indian church was not happy. Since Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan's suspension case was pending in Trichur court P.P. Devassy, the legal adviser, had begged Mar Thoma Darmo on his departure from India to Baghdad not to accept the post of the Patriarch. The supporters of Mar Thoma Darmo in the Indian church sent telegrams to Baghdad requesting Mar Thoma Darmo not to become patriarch. Yet as the church in Iraq could not find any suitable person they decided that Mar Thoma Darmo himself should be the Patriarch to lead the Assyrians who refused to adopt the western calendar.

Mar Thoma Darmo could not complete a single year in his new position. Before he completed eleven months he passed away on 7th September 1969, on the first anniversary of his arrival in Baghdad. Mar Thoma Darmo was buried in the yard of the Mar Zaya Cathedral where he was consecrated the previous year. The 23 year old Metropolitan Mar Addai began to act as Patriarch.

With the death of Mar Thoma Darmo it became clear that the old calendar group would not flourish as expected. Although Mar Thoma Darmo had

planned visits to Syria and America to establish his stronghold nothing could be done. At the same time the new calendar group under the leadership of Mar Yosip Khananisho made attempts to bring Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun back to Iraq from where he had been exiled in August, 1933 to Cyprus.

In 1948 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun who had settled down in America had a discussion with Mr. Naji Al Asil, the Iraqi delegate to the United Nations. Another meeting was held with the Iraqi Ambassador to the United States in Washington, D.C. As a result of these discussions Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun issued an epistle asking his followers in Iraq to be loyal to the King of Iraq.²⁹

... That we may ask of them to be loyal and faithful to His Majesty the King of Iraq and his exalted Government and to fulfil every duty that is expected of them as loyal subjects and men of peace, the peace unto which we have been called by our Christian faith.

On 21st Sept 1948 an Iraq newspaper Sawt Al Shab (No.3) declared,³⁰

We learn that the Iraqi Government has granted the Assyrian Patriarch Mar Shimun permission to return to Iraq if he should wish to do so.

As there was no official declaration for such a move Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun did not return to Iraq until April 24, 1970 when Patriarch was brought to the land of his exile in Iraqi Airways especially provided by the Government of Iraq.

On October 24, 1969 Mar Yosep Khananisho Metropolitan wrote to the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun that President Ahmad Hassan al Bekr of Iraq mentioned the Assyrian problem during the visit of the Metropolitan to the Presidential Palace on the occasion of the Eed Al-Ramadan feast. As per

²⁹ Quoted from Sargon Dadesho., *The Assyrian National Question At The United Nations*, Modesto, California, USA, 1987.

³⁰ Sawt Al Shab (No. 3), *An Iraq Newspaper*, dated 21 Sept., 1948.

the suggestion of the Metropolitan, the Patriarch Mar Shimun wrote an epistle to the Assyrians exhorting them to be loyal to the government. This led to a warm response from the Iraqi Minister of Interior, Saleh Mehdi Ammash.

On April 20, 1970 the Patriarch flew from San Francisco to Beirut. On April 24 the Patriarch Mar Shimun flew with other leaders from Beirut to Baghdad. The Patriarch returned from Baghdad on May 22, concluding his 4-week tour.

Although some Assyrians are still demanding their rights as an Assyrian nation, the church leaders have decided to keep away from the political attempts and to build up the spiritual walls of the Assyrian community.

During this visit Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun was given a welcome at the Green Palace by General Ahmed al Bakr, President of Iraq. The Patriarch had demanded that his churches such as Mar Zaya Cathedral in Baghdad should be taken back from the supporters of Mar Thoma Darmo and be handed back to Mar Yosip Khananishu Metropolitan. Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun didn't stay long in Iraq. Still his visit to Iraq after 37 years was a great support to the new calendar group.

The next visit of the Patriarch to Baghdad was on 1971 October. He consecrated Archdeacon C.C. Timothy Metropolitan of Malabar & India by the name Mar Timotheus. He had been ordained archdeacon two months earlier in Baghdad by Mar Yosip Khananishu Metropolitan prior to the arrival of the Patriarch. This time too Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun did not stay long in Iraq. He returned to his head quarters in California.

The government of Iraq was trying to solve the Kurdish problem. Therefore the government invited Malik Yacob de Malik Ismael, the hero of the Assyrian revolt of 1933 to come to Iraq. In February 1972 Malik Yacob arrived in Baghdad from Canada and negotiated with the Iraqi government. It was rumoured that the government asked Malik Yacob de Ismael to form an Assyrian army to work against the Kurds in the region of North Iraq. The Assyrian hero who had witnessed the sufferings and failures of such political manouvers refused to oblige.

Nevertheless on April 16, 1972 the Iraqi government granted Cultural Rights to those speaking the Syriac language from Assyrians, Syrians and Chaldeans. This decree promised to teach Assyrian language in the classes in which the Assyrian students were in majority. Help was promised even to publish books and magazines in the Assyrian language. Unfortunately, some years later all "Cultural" programmes ceased.

In 1972 the government of Iraq proposed to grant autonomous rights to the Kurds in two provinces of Sulaimanyia and Arbil. The Assyrians under the leadership of Malik Yacob de Malik Ismael submitted a National Petition to the government of Iraq requesting autonomy for the Assyrians in the province of Dohuk, north of Mosul. On January 25, 1974 Malik Yacob died suddenly in Baghdad before completing the mission which he undertook in his old age for his Assyrian people. His son Zaia de Malik Yacob, who was a deputy in the Parliament of Syria and a respected politician, continued the negotiations. Unfortunately nothing was achieved to fulfil the Assyrian dream of some autonomy in their homeland.

Although Mar Eshai Shimun had become Patriarch in 1920 he had never consecrated a bishop until 1952. It is unfortunate that a Patriarch could not consecrate a single bishop in such a long period. Of course there was a consecration in Iraq in 1951 when the old bishop of Jelu Mar Zaia Sargis had passed away and his nephew Archdeacon Isho was consecrated as Mar Isho Sargis Episcopa in 1951 itself. Since Patriarch Mar Shimun could not return to his country Iraq, the consecration was made by Mar Yosip Khananisho Metropolitan, the Patriarch's maternal uncle who had consecrated the Patriarch himself in June 1920 in Iraq.

The Indian church was requesting the Patriarch to consecrate a Metropolitan for India. After much delay the Patriarch found Deacon Mansour Elisha Darmo, from Khabour, Syria. He was recommended by Mar Yousip Khananisho Metropolitan and a lay leader Malik Yacob Ismael who had personally known the deacon who was a celibate and was about 48 years old. He was taken to America and was ordained archdeacon. He was consecrated Metropolitan in Mar Addai Church, Turlock, California in May

1952. He came to Trichur, headquarters of the Indian archdiocese in June 1952.

The five prelates Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun consecrated during his long regime of 53 years are:

1. Mar Thoma Darmo, Metropolitan of India on 4 May 1952 (in California, USA)
2. Mar Khannania Dinkha, episcopa of Iran on 11 Feb 1962 (in Teheran, Iran)
3. Mar Timotheus, Metropolitan of India on 10 Oct. 1971 in Baghdad, Iraq)
4. Mar Yohannan Abraham, episcopa for Syria, on 28 July 1968
5. Mar Narsai de Baz, episcopa on 28 July 1968

5.5 The Assassination Of The Patriarch Mar Ishai Shimun, 1975

In January 1973 the Patriarch announced his intention to retire. At the request of the prelates he waited for 8 months. On 16 August 1973 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun resigned from the post of the Patriarch that he occupied for 53 years. He married Emmama, daughter of Deacon Kallu, an Assyrian. He moved from San Francisco to San Jose in California itself.

Some bitter comments were made by his supporters against his decision to resign and to lead a private life. The resignation of a Patriarch was unknown in the history of this church.

On 6 November 1975, David, son of Malik Yacob d Malik Ishmael of Upper Tyari³¹ went to the house of Mar Eshai Shimun in San Jose. He shot

³¹ The name of the assassin is David Malek Ismail. Actually he is not the son of Malik Ismael, he is the grandson of Malik Ismail, and David's father was Yacob, one of the sons of Malik Ismael.

Mar Eshai Shimun who died the same day. The assassin served 14 years in prison. In the state of California capital punishment is abolished. Only life imprisonment is given.³²

There are suspicions in the mind of the people regarding the motives behind this assassination. The trial and re trial created some controversies. What are the real reasons for this assassination? The assassin, who is free and living in Canada, has not written his memoirs.³³

The three-member-committee consisting of younger bishops namely Mar Dinkha of Iran, Mar Narsai De Baz³⁴ and Mar Aprim Khamis³⁵ carried on the administration of the Church on behalf of the ailing senior Metropolitan Mar Yosip Khananishu of Iraq. He was the acting Patriarch during the period from August 1973 till 17 October, 1976.

The Mar Shimun family³⁶ played a significant role in the affairs of the Church of the East in the 20th Century. Surma the Beth Mar Shimun was the last one to die in 1975 among the siblings of Surma before the assassination of her nephew Mar Eshai Shimun on 6 November, 1975.

³² His detailed trial papers are found in the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Santa Clara in case no. 61669 (1975-76) before Judge George H-Barnett and a Jury.

³³ Some Assyrians believe that the motive behind the assassination is political. David who went to the house of Mar Eshai Shimun in San Jose had an argument with Mar Eshai Shimun. David's father Malik Yacob Ishmael had died suddenly in Baghdad while negotiating with the Iraqi Government a solution for the Assyrian problem. It is said that David lost control when Mar Eshai Shimun blamed David's father for the failure of efforts for the settlement of the Assyrian problem.

³⁴ Mar Narsai de Baz had been consecrated episcopa by Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun along with Mar Yohannan Abraham episcopa of Syria. This consecration took place in Beirut. Mar Narsai de Baz was raised to the rank of the Metropolitan on 17 October 1976 in Ealing, London, England. He is 4 years and 8 months younger to the Patriarch.

³⁵ Mar Aprim Khamis was consecrated episcopa on 2 March 1973 along with Mar Yakob Daniel (now living in California, USA owing to illness during the past several years) by Mar Yosip Khananishu Metropolitan in Mar Zaya Cathedral in Baghdad, Iraq. This consecration took place towards the fag end of the Patriarchal administration of Mar Eshai Shimun, in fact after announcing his intention to retire from the highest office in the Church of the East. Although consecrated for Basra in Iraq, Mar Aprim Khamis was sent to the USA after Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun resigned. Since 1973 Bishop Mar Aprim

Khamis was the Bishop of USA & Canada. In 1990 he took care of the diocese of the USA only, as a bishop (Mar Emmanuel) was consecrated for the diocese of Canada on 3rd June 1990. Later he was appointed to the diocese of Eastern USA when Bishop Bawai Soro was consecrated on 14 October 1984 and appointed to the diocese of Western USA. Since 1998 Mar Aprim shifted his residence from Chicago to Phoenix, Arizona where he is in charge of the Assyrian parishes in southern California and Arizona.

³⁶ Ishai Benyamin Shimun and his wife Asyat had six sons and two daughters. 1. Surma Ishai Shimun (1883-1975) 2. Romie (1885-1941) 3. Benyamin (1886-1918) 4. David (1887-1974) 5. Hormizd (1891-1915) 6. Poulose (1893-1920) 7. Zaya (twin) (1893-1947) 8. Eshaya Ishai (1895-1915).

It is to be noted that four out of the six sons, two were murdered and two died young. Hormizd was 24 years of age when the Turks killed him in 1915. Patriarch Mar Benyamin was 32 years of age when he was murdered in 1918. Of the two who died Eshaya died at the age of 20 in 1915, while Patriarch Mar Poulose died aged 27 in 1920. Of the two married brothers David (father of Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun) lived till a ripe old age of 87. Zaya, the twin brother of Patriarch Mar Poulose Shimun, died when he was 54 years old.

Of the two daughters, Surma the eldest remained single according to the custom and ruled the patriarchal household. She died only at the age of 92. The second sister, Romie was married to Shlimun, son of Malik Ismael of Upper Tyari. She lived only upto the age of 56 years.

Vasil Siminov of the Ashurbanipal Library, Chicago, prepared this list for the research of Dr. J.F. Coakley. The present writer is grateful to Dr. J.F. Coakley for supplying a copy.

ECUMENICAL ERA 1976 – 2000
FROM THE CONSECRATION OF THE
PRESENT CATHOLICOS PATRIARCH
MAR KHANANIA
DINKHA IV TILL OCTOBER 2000

CHAPTER VI

6.1 The Consecration Of The Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, 1976

The Holy Synod held in Alton Abby near London¹ in October 1976 elected Mar Khanania Dinkha, bishop of Teheran since February 1962 to become the Patriarch of the Church of the East and of the Assyrians. The senior Metropolitan Mar Yosip Khananisho² could not attend the Synod, as it was impossible for him to travel from Baghdad to England owing to his old age.

¹ The Holy Synod to elect the Patriarch of the Church of the East was held in Alton Abby near London, England. But the consecration of the Patriarch on 17th October 1976 was at St. Barnabas Church, Ealing, London

² Mar Yosip Khananishu Metropolitan who died on 3rd July 1977 in Baghdad was the 12th Metropolitan of Mar Khananishu family. The names of all of them are not known today. The 10th Mar Khananisho was Mar Yosip, the same name as that of 12th one. The graves of five of the first eight Metropolitans are found in Mar Isho Monastery. Three cannot be traced. Mar Isho is the name of the village in Shamasdin, Turkey. The Mar Khananisho Metropolitans are called "Metropolitan of Shamasdin and Rustaqa".

The 9th Mar Khananisho Metropolitan was buried in the Church of Bnai Shmoon in the village of Charookhm in Bohtan, Turkey. He was returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land when he suddenly became ill and died.

The 10th Mar Khananisho, i.e. Mar Yosip was mentioned in the book of Rev. E.L. Cutts in 1976. He was probably consecrated in 1862 by Patriarch Mar Ruvel Shimun. His successor Mar Ishaq Khananisho was also consecrated by the same Patriarch. This Mar Ishaq Metropolitan raised Mar Benyamin Metropolitan to the rank of Patriarch on 12 April 1903, two weeks after the death of the Patriarch Mar Ruwil Shimun which had taken place on March 29.

Mar Ishaq died in 1918 during the journey from Turkey to the Baquba refugee camp near Baghdad. He was buried in Kermanshah, on the eastern border of Iran.

The 12th Metropolitan of this family is Mar Yosip born in 1893. He was ordained a deacon and raised to the rank of a priest in 1912. This young priest Yosip was consecrated Episcopa on August 10, 1914 by Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun. Patriarch Mar Poulouse Shimun became Patriarch in 1918. His Holiness raised Episcopa Mar Yosip to the rank of the Metropolitan after the death of Mar Ishaq in December 1918.

Mar Yosip was the longest reigning prelate in the 20th century. He was bishop for 4 years and Metropolitan for 59, making a total of 63 years. He is the last prelate of Mar Khananisho family. He was acting Patriarch from 16 August 1973 till 17 October 1976, a little more than 3 years. Mar Yosip Khananisho Metropolitan is known for his piety. He had copied several Syriac manuscripts. His memorial is fixed for the 2nd Sunday of July.

Mar Timotheus Metropolitan of India presided.³ All the others were bishops and not metropolitans. Mar Khanania Dinkha was the senior most of the prelates in the rank of the episcopa. The canon law requires that the Patriarch should have attained the age of 40. Bishop Mar Khanania Dinkha had completed 40 years of age in September the previous year. He was unanimously chosen to the highest rank in this ancient Church. Born in Iraq and moving to Iran after becoming a priest in 1957 and serving the Church in Iran as bishop for fourteen and a half years since 11 February 1962 the new patriarch was the most suitable candidate for the post.

The new Patriarch was consecrated in the Anglican Church of St. Barnabas in Ealing on 17th October 1976. Mar Dinkha was given the title Mar Dinkha IV as he became the Catholicos Patriarch. He immediately decided to end the division in the Church and deputed Mar Timotheus Metropolitan of India to meet with Patriarch Mar Addai in Baghdad and other prelates. After meeting with Patriarch Mar Addai in Baghdad and Mar Narsai Thoma Metropolitan of Kirkuk,⁴ he returned to his headquarters in Trichur, India and discussed with the prelates of the old calendar in Trichur, namely Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Poulouse Mar Poulouse episcopa. Unfortunately, unity was not achieved.

In April- May 1977 Mar Aprem Metropolitan of India visited America to explore the possibility of unity of the two groups. The Indian Church was not interested in the tribal considerations while some Assyrians used to justify the split of the ancient church into two groups. Mar Aprem Metropolitan of India met with Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis in Yonkers, New York and discussed terms for unity with help of Deacon Dr. C.J. Chacko and his

³ The Holy Synod continued under the presidentship of the new Patriarch H.H. Mar Khanania Dinkha IV after his consecration on October 17, 1976.

⁴ Mar Timotheus Metropolitan met the Patriarch Mar Addai II and Metropolitan Mar Narsai Thoma separately in Baghdad. For both these prelates were acting separately. The third prelate in Iraq of the Old Calendar namely Mar Thoma Geevarghese was not in Iraq as he had gone to Cairo, Egypt for theological studies in a Protestant Seminary.

able wife Dr. Dorothy Chacko.⁵ Mar Aprem Metropolitan made it clear that the minimum demand from the people of India who admire Mar Thoma Darmo for his many achievements in India is that the suspension order dated 10 January 1964 against Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan should be cancelled. The bishops consecrated by the same Metropolitan should be recognized as such. Since it was difficult to have two heads, Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis suggested that Mar Aprem of India should go to Baghdad and persuade Patriarch Mar Addai II to agree to function as the Deputy Patriarch under Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV. This suggestion was not acceptable to Patriarch Mar Addai II.

In 1984 a synod was held in Baghdad under the presidentship of Patriarch Mar Addai II and explored the possibility of reconciliation between the two groups. Nothing happened immediately as the synod was being held in Baghdad and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV was in Iran. Due to the war between Iraq and Iran at that time, it was not possible to communicate with each other. Later in October 1984, Patriarch Mar Addai II went to Chicago and along with Mar Aprem of India there were discussions for unity between two calendar groups. But nothing happened.⁶ In Feb. 1990 Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV had a Synod in Baghdad he met with Patriarch Mar Addai II and two of his Metropolitans⁷ and agreed to have a peace committee of two Metropolitans from each side.

⁵ Deacon Dr. C.J. Chacko was from India, but he was teaching in America after his retirement from the University of Delhi, India. His wife Dorothy Chacko was an American Medical Doctor. She was the founder president of the *Mahila Samajam* (Women's Society) of the Church of the East in India. Both were very close to the late Mar Abimelak Timotheus Metropolitan and later to Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan. Deacon Chacko first went to the USA in 1924 as secretary to Mar Timotheus Metropolitan when he went to the USA seeking help for the settlement of the Assyrian refugees following the First World War (1914 - 18).

⁶ In addition to two Patriarchs and Metropolitan Mar Aprem and Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis clergy and leaders like Archdeacon Kaku Lazar were present. Archdeacon Kaku Lazar was a great Aramaic scholar who had taught Mar Aprem, Mar Poulose and others in the Seminary in Trichur, Kerala, India. Archdeacon Kaku Lazar wanted the unity of the two calendars. Unfortunately he died on July 30, 1990 before unity negotiations bore fruit.

⁷ Mar Narsai Thoma, Metropolitan of Kirkuk and Mar Thoma Geevarghese, Metropolitan of Nineveh.

In March 1990 the Synod of the old calendar met under Mar Addai II and ratified the suggestion for a peace committee of two Metropolitans from each side. Mar Narsai Metropolitan of the new calendar was in the USA at that time. The other three Metropolitans of the peace committee met in Baghdad.

They were Mar Aprem Metropolitan of India, Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Kirkuk and Mar Geevarghese Metropolitan of Baghdad. It was decided to meet at a convenient time later. The meeting was fixed for the early part of August in Baghdad. Mar Aprem received a telegram from Baghdad asking him to proceed to Baghdad. That sad night Iraqi army invaded Kuwait. It became difficult to make contact with Baghdad. In January 1991, America bombed Baghdad cutting off all communications between Baghdad and outside world.

Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV visited India at the invitation of his followers in January 1991. He made use of this opportunity to negotiate peace with the Indian prelates of the Mar Thoma Darmo group. Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Poulouse Mar Poulouse. They made their minimum demand that the suspension of Mar Thoma Darmo dated 10 January 1964 should be cancelled and all ordinations conducted by him should be recognized by those under Mar Dinkha IV. The followers of Mar Dinkha were not willing and their Patriarch returned without unity.

In 1994 the Synod of Patriarch Mar Dinkha met in Sydney, Australia. Although Patriarch Mar Addai went to Sydney to visit his followers there, no progress was made in unity negotiation. Later in March 1995, Mar Bawai Soro of new calendar group met Mar Aprem Metropolitan of India at a Pro Oriente consultation in Vienna. They discussed between themselves the terms and conditions for a possible reconciliation in India, if such a reconciliation is impossible at a universal level. It was felt that there were some tribal and clannish considerations of the Assyrians, which make reconciliation delayed beyond reasonable time. The Synod held in Baghdad in March 1990 had authorized the Indian Church to proceed with unity if there was delay for the universal church to unite.

The Vienna proposals suggested that two prelates of the group under Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV should visit India and negotiate unity similar to the proposals discussed by the Patriarch himself in India in January 1991. Thus two prelates namely Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon and Mar Meelis Zaia, episcopa of Australia and New Zealand who was also secretary of the Holy Synod visited Trichur in November 1995 and started negotiation with Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Mar Poulose episcopa. Mar Timotheus Metropolitan of the Patriarchal group also was involved in the negotiation. The central trustees (four on each side) of both groups participated. On 13th November 1995 the prelates of the Indian Church and the Central Trustees signed the agreement on the unity of two groups.⁸ An Episcopal council was proposed for a period of two years in which Mar Timotheus Metropolitan would be the Chairman and Poulose Mar Poulose Episcopa will be the secretary.

Mar Aprem will do the duties of the Head of the Church and preside over the Representative council of the church. The Church in India would frame a constitution as soon as possible and would implement it after approval was given by Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV.

The news of the reconciliation in India was an exciting news to Christians and non-Christians alike. On Friday November 17th Mar Narsai Metropolitan celebrated holy Qurbana in the Marth Mariyam Cathedral. Many members of the church who were keeping away from this church after the split in January 1964 were entering this church after a gap of 31 years. There was great joy all around. The public meeting was an expression of the truth that unity would go down in history as an historic event. It was also hoped that the branches of the Church of the East in other countries would follow this good example in the spirit of love of Christ.

⁸ The minimum demand for the cancellation of the suspension order of Mar Thoma Darmo, Metropolitan by the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun was not fully met. Nevertheless it was assured that this matter would be sympathetically considered in the following Holy Synod. But all ordinations and consecrations conducted by Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan after his suspension on 10 January, 1964 till his death were recognised with immediate effect. Later in the Holy Synod held in Chicago in June 1997, the suspension order of 10 January 1964 was cancelled.

The Church conducted elections after the new constitution was formulated and approved by the Patriarch.⁹ Many constructions of school, churches, orphanage etc. were made. In January 2000 Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria and Europe along with Fr.Dr. Geevarghese Toma of Chicago made a historic visit to the Indian Church.¹⁰

6.2 The Holy Synods

Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV believes in holding Holy Synods more frequently. He presided over seven Holy Synods between 1976 and 1999. The holy synods were held in 1976, 1978, 1984, 1990, 1994, 1997 and 1999.¹¹ Several issues relating to the church, clergy and the faithful were discussed in detail and decisions were reached for the benefit of the church. Even the interviews of the candidates for the bishoprics were held during the sessions of the synod so that the brother bishops and archbishops present in the synod could examine the faith and the calling of the candidates to episcopacy. The tradition of the episcopal families was abandoned. The decrees of the last Holy Synod of 1999 are given as Appendix in this dissertation.

At the fifth Holy Synod convened by Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV on July 18-29, 1994 a Commission on Inter-Church Relations and Education Development (CIRED)¹² was formed and Bishop Bawai Soro was appointed as Secretary General.

⁹ On August 13, 1997 The Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV gave approval to the Constitution of the Church of the East in India. The newly elected Board of Central Trustees (9 members) took charge on 27th December, 1997.

¹⁰ The historic Patriarchal visit was from 19 - 31 January, 2000. During this visit His Holiness was received well, not only in the head quarters in Trichur but also in Coimbatore, Kottayam and Ernakulam. Many leaders including H.H. Mar Thoma Mathews II, Catholicos of the Malankara Indian Orthodox Syrian Church, came to Trichur to pay respects to Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV.

¹¹ In many publications of the Church of the East the Synod of 1999 is described as the 8th Synod. Actually there were only seven. There was a synod called in 1987 to meet in Chicago. Mar Timotheus Metropolitan of India went to Chicago to attend the proposed Synod. But Mar Geevarghese Sliwa, Metropolitan of Iraq could not come owing to the Iran - Iraq war that ended only on 8 - 8- 1988. Therefore the Synod was postponed which later met only in 1990.

¹² This Commission has a Website (www.cired.org) which gives a lot of information on the history and faith of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East.

All the Decrees of the Holy Synods since October 1976 have been announced throughout the Church of the East for the information of the faithful. The detailed minutes are kept with the prelates only. The membership of the Holy Synods are for the Bishops and Metropolitans. The Catholicos Patriarch presides. Usually the Holy Synods meet once in every three years. Sometimes a Patriarchal council is held by the Patriarch to discuss urgent issues. Such Patriarchal Councils were recently held in June 1989, Dec. 1993, June 1995, June 1996, and 1998.

The December 1993 Council was called the mini Synod. The June 1989 Council in Chicago was called the Council of prelates. Patriarch was not present in it. Mar Narsai Metropolitan presided over it.¹³

6.3 The Present Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV

His Holiness Mar Khanania Dinkha IV, The present Catholicos Patriarch of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East was consecrated on 17 October, 1976 in Ealing, London, England. Under his leadership during the past 24 years, the Church of the East is on her way to the restoration of her glorious past.

Among leaders of the Christian denominations whom Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV met, the following names can be mentioned.¹⁴

1. Pope John Paul II, Vatican
2. Patriarch Pimen of Russia, Moscow
3. Pope (Patriarch) Schenouda of the Coptic Church, Cairo
4. Patriarch Zakai Iwas I of the Syrian Orthodox Church, Damascus
5. Patriarch Mar Ignatius of the Rom Orthodox Church
6. Catholicos Vazgen of Armenia, Yerevan
7. Mar Sarkis Karakin, Armenia, Catholicos of Lebanon

¹³ The writer is grateful to Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia of Sydney, Australia who is the secretary of the Holy Synod in supplying information about the Holy Synods as well as the Patriarchal Councils which are not publicly well known.

¹⁴ Taken and modified from *Voice from the East*, Chicago,

8. Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem
9. Armenian Patriarch of Turkey
10. Patriarch of Rumania, Mar Teotsis
11. Patriarch of Georgia, Mar Iliya
12. Metropolitan Basil of Polish Orthodox Church
13. Metropolitan of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church
14. Mar Raphael Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church, Baghdad
15. Patriarch Safr of the Maronite Church, Lebanon
16. Archbishop of Canterbury
17. Archbishop of Sweden
18. Many Cardinals such as Cardinal Cassidy (Unity), Cardinal Bernardin (Chicago) etc.
19. Leaders of the World Council of Churches, Geneva
20. Leaders of the Middle East Council of Churches

In addition to the Church leaders His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV met many Heads of nations and among them there were the President of Iraq, the President of Syria and the President of Lebanon.

About forty Churches and schools were constructed in many parts of the world. As the Patriarchal Cathedral of Mar Sargis in Chicago was not large enough to hold the Assyrian congregation in Chicago, he bought Mar Geevarghese Church in Chicago and made it the Patriarchal Cathedral in 1986. That too was not sufficient. So he built a new Church Mart Mariyam in Rosalle and consecrated it on August 16, 1997 in a unique ecumenical service along with Patriarch Mar Raphael Bidawid of Chaldean Catholic Church, who came from Baghdad to participate in this service and held a bilateral dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and Chaldean Catholic Church of the East that was split in 1553 AD in the time of John Sulaqa.

In Chicago, another Assyrian Church St. John's Church came under Patriarch's jurisdiction as the priest of the Church Sadok de Mar Shimun passed away. As the Church members are of the second and third generation Assyrians,

many of whom do not read or write the language of their fathers, a non-Assyrian priest (Fr. Charles H. Klutz) was appointed as its pastor.

In America in addition to the non-Assyrian congregations in Seattle, Washington started during the time of the late Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun, a congregation in Sacramento, California joined the Church. Thus the Assyrian Church of the East in USA has two non-Assyrian parishes (Seattle & Sacramento) under non-Assyrian priests (Cor episcopa Michael Birnie and Fr. Dmitri Grekov).

Now there are Assyrian Churches all over the world. Churches were built in Moscow, Beirut, Syria, Sweden, Australia, USA, Canada etc after the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV took over the administration of the church universal.

In addition to the seminary in Baghdad, Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV made arrangements for a scholarship programme for clergy to study in Rome etc. He started the order of nuns on the Mart Mariam Day (August 15) in 1996 in Baghdad and in 1998 in India.

6.4 The Church In Australia And New Zealand

The Assyrians continued their search to find a land to live. Although many migrated to the USA, Europe etc. it was not easy to find job for all Assyrians who had lost their ancestral lands. Some Assyrians went to Australia after 1960. These early Assyrians requested their Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII to send a priest to do spiritual duties to them in Australia. Towards the end of 1969 the office of the Patriarchate in San Francisco, California replied that the Patriarch would send an Assyrian priest to Australia.

In May 1970 Rev. Kiwarkis Yonan from Lebanon, aged 44, arrived in Sydney, Australia and he did his first Qurbana in Australia in June 1970. The land for St. Mary's Church was purchased in Polding Street, Smithfield, near Sydney, New South Wales in 1972.

In December 1974 St Mary's Church was consecrated, the first Assyrian Church in Australia. In 1978 a Church hall was added next to the Church building.

The steady inflow of Assyrian migrants during the seventies saw a large increase in the Church membership. In 1976, Reverend Kiwarkis Yonan was elevated to the rank of an Archdeacon.

In 1979, the Melbourne Parish was established and a Church was purchased to serve the needs of the congregation. The late Archdeacon Younan Towana served as Parish priest. In 1981, Rev. Gewargis Haroon (now Corepiscopa) was appointed as the Parish Priest. At present Rev Gevarghese K. Thoma who originally belonged to the old calendar group is the vicar of this parish in Reservoir, close to Melbourne.

In 1982, a large portion (5.5 acres) of land was purchased in the City of Fairfield initially to build a large Church upon it. In 1984, the Holy Synod of the Church assembled in Chicago, USA, decreed to establish Diocesan administration for Australia. His Grace Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia was appointed to the Diocese and he arrived in Australia in March 1985.

In 1986, Rev. Romeo A. Oraham was ordained Priest for the Parish of St. Mary's Fairfield. In the same year the Synod of the Church decreed a new Constitution for Australian Diocese and in 1987, the Diocesan administration was formally established. The Church membership continued to grow during the late eighties and in 1990, the Diocese fulfilled the need for another priest by ordaining Rev. Ashur Lazar.

6.5 Saint Hurmizd's Parish

In the middle of 1987, a decision was taken to find suitable land for a new Church building, By late March 1988 contracts were exchanged for the purchase of this site at a cost of \$273,000.

On 10th April, 1988 a decision was made to establish the Rabban Hurmizd Parish. Land was acquired at 5-9 Greenfield Road, Greenfield Park. The construction commenced in 1989.

In April 1988 His Grace Mar Meelis Zaia, Bishop of Australian Diocese, invited members of the Church to a fund raising meeting which was attended by over 750 members and with in few months a total of \$570,000 was pledged.

Since the Church embarked on the St. Hurmizd's Cathedral project, the 5.5 acre land at Bulls Road has been earmarked for a possible primary school development in the future. Also at this meeting H. G. Mar Meelis Zaia announced that the new church was to be named "St. Hurmizd" after the fifth century Saint of this Church.

On 26th February 1989 a ceremony was held for the laying of the foundation stone by the visiting Metropolitan Mar Narsai Debaz, Metropolitan of Lebanon and all Europe. The generous contributions and voluntary labour and time of the congregation made to complete the project in success.

After the official opening on 16th December, 1990 the Cathedral was consecrated on 23rd December, 1990 and services to the congregation commenced on Christmas Day 1990.

A dispute arose in the St. Mary's Parish, Polding Street, Fairfield. The final decision was made in 1989 in the Supreme Court in Sydney in favour of the Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia. Those who lost the civil suit went and built Mar Zaia Cathedral near Sydney itself, they are known as old calendarians.¹⁵

¹⁵ In August 1987 Patriarch Mar Addai of Baghdad and Mar Aprem of India visited Sydney and Melbourne in Australia. Supporters of old Calendar group arranged Patriarch Mar Addai to celebrate Holy Qurbana in St. Mary's Church, Polding Street. Archdeacon Kiwarkis Yonan did not officially assist at the service, but made the necessary arrangements and was personally present in the church. A resolution was passed on 25 September 1988 by the parishioners of the St. Mary's Church, Polding street recognizing Mar Addai II as the Patriarch. Since that time Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia began to conduct Qurbana at St. Johns High School Hall in Greenfield Park in Fairfield.

In 1992 Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia appointed Fr. Toma K. Toma priest for New Zealand. He lives in Wellington and conducts Holy Qurbana on the first three Sundays there. On the last Sundays he travels to Auckland and conducts Holy Qurbana there. These are the two cities where the Assyrians live in New Zealand. The Assyrians are growing in these two cities. The Assyrians do not have any church buildings in New Zealand. The Anglicans as well as the Catholics allow their church buildings to be used by these Christians who have immigrated to New Zealand. It is possible that the Assyrians in Auckland and Wellington will prosper and build their own churches.

In July 1994 the Holy Synod of the Church of the East was held in Sydney. Rev. Romeo A. Oraham, who was ordained in 1986 for Fairfield and had undergone theological training in England, was consecrated Bishop and was sent to Sweden as Bishop of Europe.

In June 2000 the *Symposium Syriacum* of the Scholars of the World met for the first time in Australia. Although it was held in the University of Sydney the Assyrian Church of the East in Sydney took active interest in hosting this symposium. Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia of the diocese of Australia and New Zealand worked with the organizer of the Symposium, Professor Riffat Ebied of the Department of the Semitic Studies of the University of Sydney in making the 8th International Congress for Syriac Studies a success.

Not only scholars but also other Assyrians were involved in the events of

In April 1989 the Supreme Court of New South Wales in Sydney commenced the trial of the dispute. In addition to the local bishop Mar Meelis Zaia and archdeacon Yonan Kiwarkis, witnesses were brought from abroad. Mar Aprem Metropolitan from India, Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis of Chicago and archdeacon Yonan Youel Yonan from London, England were examined in the Supreme Court in Sydney. Judgement of the Supreme Court was in favour of Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia. The supporters of Patriarch Mar Addai II refused to hand over the St. Mary's Church to Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia. Finally, they were forced to vacate the St. Mary's Church and build another church

As a result of this split of the Assyrian Church of the East in this diocese since 1987, the old calendar now has three congregations in this diocesan area under Patriarch Mar Addai II. They are at Sydney, Melbourne and Wellington. It is hoped that the Assyrians in Australia and New Zealand will work together forgetting the bitter hatred of the 1987-89 that dragged this community to the Supreme Court in Sydney.

this scholarly gathering. Young members of the Assyrian Church worked as volunteers under the organization called The Assyrian Australian Academic Society (TAAAS). The reception dinner given at the Edessa Hall of the St.Hormuzd Church was an occasion for Syriac scholars all over the world to know more about this “prosperous” Assyrian community. The Assyrian Choir under Rabbi Shoura Michalian was an expression of the talents of the Assyrian community, which was not known to the world as they were fleeing from the mountains of the Hakkari region in Mesopotamia in the first half of the twentieth century.

6.6 Mar Narsai Press, Thrissur

The significant contribution of the Church of the East in India as far as the Syriac literature is concerned, is two-fold. The first is the preservation of over 80 Syriac Manuscripts, some of them go back to the period prior to Synod of Diamper of 1599 AD. In spite of the persecutions and the burning of the Syriac books it is surprising that the Church of the East is able to preserve for posterity some valuable Syriac Manuscripts. All Syriac books in the 16th century in India were manuscripts, as there were no printed books at that time.

Attention was drawn to these Syriac manuscripts at Trichur through a paper presented in the 3rd Syriac Symposium held at Goslar, Germany in 1980. Ever since it is published the Syriac scholars have visited Trichur to refer to these Manuscripts. As the climate is not good in India for the safety of the Manuscripts, the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary along with SEERI, Kottayam undertook to copy all these manuscripts into CD ROM and make it available to the scholarly world. The project, which began by February 2000 AD, is almost complete in October, at the conclusion of this dissertation. Sample CD ROMs were distributed in the 8th Symposium Syriacum held in Sydney, Australia in June 2000.

The second significant contribution of this Church in Trichur is in the field of printing the rare Syriac books. The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Assyrian Mission had established a Mission Press in which several Syriac books were

printed. The American Presbyterian Mission also had printed some books.

The First World War (1914-18) made both the English and the American Missions to close their operations among the Assyrians. This made a necessity to start a printing Press in Iraq or in India. As a matter of fact in 1924 an Assyrian Mission Press was started by the efforts of Deacon Joseph Kellaita (later made priest in 1927). The same scholar was responsible for starting the Mar Narsai Press in Trichur.

Joseph Kellaita was a Syriac scholar. He belonged to the Kellaita family (distant cousin) of Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan of Malabar and India. Mar Timotheus who visited Iraq in 1919 and in 1920 to help the settlement of the Assyrian refugees who were in the Baquba camp near Baghdad brought Deacon Joseph Kellaita to Trichur. He spent nearly two years in Trichur writing the Syriac types for the smiths and carpenters to make the 'mould' for casting the metal types for printing.

Around 1923 or so Deacon Joseph Kellaita took all the types (fonts) he had prepared in Trichur to Mosul in Iraq to start a printing Press in Iraq. Mar Timotheus Metropolitan was not disappointed. He worked for another set of the similar Syriac types and started in 1926 AD, Mar Narsai Press in the building adjacent to the clergy quarters at the Marth Mariyam Church.¹⁶

Mar Narsai Press, Trichur printed many Syriac books. During 1929 - 1933 a brilliant Syriac student of Rev. Joseph Kellaita namely Deacon Benjamin Geevarghese of Ashitha came from Mosul and assisted the Syriac printing as well as teaching students Syriac language.

Isaac Simon, a bearded layman from Mosul, helped Mar Timotheus to print some books. Mar Timotheus had plans to print Hudra, the prayer book for evening and morning prayers. But he could not find time and resources to undertake such a heavy work.

¹⁶ It was one year after Marth Mariyam Big Church was handed over to Mar Timotheus Metropolitan as the court receivers had to leave after the 'Award' of Mr. C.W.E. Cotton, British Political Agent.

Hudra was printed during 1960 -1962 by Mar Thoma Darmo, who was Metropolitan in India during 1952 - 68. This is the first time the Assyrian Church of the East printed the precious prayer book. Upto this time some Churches were using the Chaldean (Catholic) Hudra edited by Paul Bedjan and published in Leipzig, Germany.

Now throughout the Church of the East, whether in Iraq or in Australia the name of the town of Thrissur (old English spelling is Trichur) is known by all the Assyrians because *Hudra*, *Qurbana Taksa*, Burial books, Marriage books, *D'Qdam Vadvathar*, Blessing of the House (*Boorakh Bathe*), *Thurgame*, etc. are printed at Mar Narsai Press.

At present some of these books are not available at Mar Narsai Press. A reprint of Hudra (3 volumes) was made in 1993 by Mar Narsai Press. It was printed at Ebenezer Press in Trichur as Mar Narsai Press had not bought offset machine. As it is difficult to find type setters in Syriac, Mar Narsai Press is not printing new books. As it has an offset machine now, it is possible to reprint the existing books. It is also planning to print Syriac books after composing the matter by Computer, as Syriac fonts are available. But there are no Assyrians in India. Even the Indians who have learned this language know only *lishana atieqa* (old language) which is used in the liturgy. The modern spoken Assyrian is slightly different.

6.7 Ecumenical Contacts

The present Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East His Holiness Mar Khanania Dinkha IV was enthroned in England on 17 October 1976. The consecration ceremony was in the Anglican Church of St. Barnabas in Ealing near London, England¹⁷. The majority of the Assyrians who migrated to England live in the Ealing area. The Assyrians had no church of their own in England at that time.

The Catholicos Patriarch who had been the bishop of the Assyrian Church

¹⁷ His predecessor Mar Eshai Shimun (1908 - 1975) too was consecrated Patriarch in an Anglican Church, namely St. George in Baghdad, Iraq.

in Iran since 11 February 1962 had abundant ecumenical experience. Over a century the Assyrian church was very close to the Church of England. Archbishop Benson of Canterbury had established the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrians in June 1886. After the First World War of 1914-18 the mission in the Kurdistan had ceased to function. Still some old missionaries like the Rev. W.A. Wigram continued their friendship with the Assyrian Church of the East and its leadership. The present Catholicos Patriarch Mar Khanania Dinkha IV was present at the installation of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey.

The Anglicans were interested in establishing inter communion with the Assyrian Church of the East. Referring to the Lambeth Conference of 1908 AD Bishop Christopher Hill quotes from the speech of Bishop John Wordsworth of Salisbury,¹⁸

The separated Churches of the East have never been properly treated, if treated at all, by this conference. They have been scarcely noticed as existing, and yet they open a field most opportune. I should say, and the most ready of access of any field outside the English - speaking races, they are large bodies and very kindly disposed bodies..... the Assyrian Church, for which I wish specially to plead, has about 100,000 or 120,000 souls in Assyria, as well as a small branch in Cochin. Now inter-communion with all these bodies would be perfectly easy, if we could only get over the fact of their formal heresy..... the heresy of Nestorianism attributed to the Assyrians.

Dr. J.F. Coakley, senior lecturer in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization at Harvard University, rightly points out the fact that we owe a debt to the pioneers like the Revd. George Percy Badger (1815-88)¹⁹ and to Rev. William Ainger Wigram (1873-1953)²⁰, both An-

¹⁸ John Wordsworth in W.A. Wigram's *Doctrinal Position Of The Assyrian Or East Syrian Church*, London, 1908, p.56 (quoted from Microfilm 10075, Reel 3, ITEM 37, The British Library, London).

¹⁹ Dr. Coakley believes that the Rev. George Badger was "the first to make a serious case that its doctrine was not, from a Catholic point of view, heretical.

²⁰ Rev. Wigram was the most energetic worker of his day in the cause of theological understanding between the Church of the East and the Church of the West.

glican clergymen who had worked among the Assyrian Christians and laid “some of the intellectual groundwork” for the present theological agreement. Coakley comments:²¹

Wigram’s reference to the Church of England calls attention to the fact that he was an Anglican; and within the Anglican communion there was the opportunity to put his conclusions about doctrinal agreement into practice. Provision for inter communion with the Church of the East was finally ratified on the Anglican side by the Lambeth Conference of 1920. As the “Common Christological Declaration” reminds us, on the Roman Catholic view the sharing of communion is appropriate only at a later stage in the ecumenical process.

Referring to the content of the Common Christological Declaration, and the contribution of W. A. Wigram in that direction Coakley opines:²²

Wigram proposed that some formula of belief should be found to which both sides could assent. This would be more positive and definite than arguments about what false doctrine the Assyrians did not believe. Wigram’s choice (among several which he discussed with the Patriarch and other leaders) was the so-called Formulary of Reunion of 433 between the bishops of Antioch and Alexandria. This opened with the words: ‘we confess Our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, the only begotten, perfect God and perfect man, of a rational soul and a body; begotten of his Father according to his Godhead before the ages, but in the last days, for us and for our salvation, of the Virgin Mary; consubstantial with the Father as touching his Godhead and consubstantial with us touching his manhood; for there was a union of the two natures; therefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord’. This is the same kind of text with much of the same vocabulary that we have in the “Common Christological Declaration.”

²¹ J.F. Coakley, *Voice from the East*, Chicago, January - April, 1999, p.5.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

After the Lambeth Conference of 1920, the Assyrians were more concerned about finding a homeland or some refugee camps for those who had fled from Turkey. Thus the theological discussions did not have any priority.

The last Lambeth Conferences in 1988 as well as in 1998 did receive official delegate of the Assyrian Church of the East.²³ But the Church of the East did not show much interest to develop an official relationship with the Church of England.

The Assyrian Church of the East in recent decades believes that it finds more comfortable ties with the Roman Catholic Church rather than Anglicans who have women priests. A decision of the Lambeth Conference of 1988 permits even lady bishops.

6.7.1 Signing Of The Common Christological Declaration.

In 1978 Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV attended the installation of Pope John Paul II in Vatican. On November 7 to 9, 1984 Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV made an official visit to Vatican. As a result it was decided to have official dialogue with the Vatican. There were five meetings in the following ten years. As a result the Common Christological Declaration was signed by Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV and Pope John Paul II. It was an important ecumenical news welcomed by many churches. There were similar agreements between the Vatican and the Coptic Orthodox Church in 1973, Syrian Orthodox Church in 1984 and Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church in 1990.

The Pope and the Patriarch concluded their Common Christological Declaration with the following practical and positive note.²⁴

Living by this faith and these sacraments, it follows as a conse-

²³ Archdeacon Yonan Y. Yonan of London. The Old Calendar group was represented by Mar Aprem in 1988.

²⁴ Full text of the Common Christological Declaration is given as Appendix 2 in this dissertation.

quence that the particular Catholic churches and the particular Assyrian churches can recognize each other as sister Churches. To be full and entire, communion presupposes the unanimity concerning the content of the faith, the sacraments and the constitution of the Church. Since this unanimity for which we aim has not yet been attained, we cannot unfortunately celebrate together the Eucharist, which is the sign of the ecclesial communion already fully restored.

Nevertheless, the deep spiritual communion in the faith and the mutual trust already existing between our Churches entitle us from now on to consider witnessing together to the Gospel message and co-operating in particular pastoral situations, including especially the areas of catechesis and the formation of future priests.

In thanking God for having made us rediscover what already unites us in the faith and the sacraments, we pledge ourselves to do every thing possible to dispel the obstacles of the past which still prevent the attainment of full communion between our two Churches, so that we can better respond to the Lord's call for the unity of his own, a unity which has of course to be expressed visibly. To overcome these obstacles, we now establish a Mixed Committee for theological dialogue between the Catholic and the Assyrian Church of the East.

As a result of the signing of the Common Christological Declaration a Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue was appointed by the two Churches. The MCTD has met in 1995, 96, 97, 98, and 99. The latest meeting took place in Arezzo near Florence, Italy on 12-14, October, 2000. In this meeting the name of Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue (MCTD) was changed into Joint Committe for Theological Dialogue (JCTD).

6.7.2 The Assyrian -Chaldean Dialogue

The Assyrian Church and the Chaldean Church were one and the same till

1553. Even after the time of John Sulaqa there was rethinking in some circles whether they should remain separate or not. When the Common Christological Declaration was signed in Vatican the bishops of the Chaldean Church were in Rome.

It was felt that there should be a direct dialogue between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church. They share common cultural and linguistic ties. They have same liturgy and the same liturgical tongue. Fr.Prof. Sarhad Jammo and Bishop Bawai Soro held initial talks. In 1996 the Patriarchs met in Southfield, Michigan on 29 November 1996.

The Holy Synod held in Chicago in June 1997 gave approval to the proposal to have closer cooperation between the Assyrian Church and the Chaldean Church. Bishop Mar Yosip Sargis of Baghdad expressed his doubts about the usefulness of such dialogue. On August 13 and 14, 1997 a committee selected by the Holy Synod of 1997 June and the Chaldean Patriarch and their Committee met in Chicago. In this important meeting in August 1997 in Chicago the following prelates were present along with their Patriarchs.

Assyrians

1. H.E. Mar Gewargis Slewa, Archbishop of Iraq and Russia, (Member)
2. H.E. Poulouse Mar Poulouse, Bishop of Trichur, (Member)
3. H.E. Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of Eastern USA, (Member)
4. H.E. Mar Bawai Soro, Bishop of Seattle, General Secretary of Commission of Inter-Church Relations and Education Development, (Member)
5. H.E. Mar Emmanuel Emmanuel, Bishop of Canada, (Guest)

Two were absent

6. H.E. Mar Narsai Debaz, Archbishop of Lebanon, Syria & Europe, Patriarchal Vicar, (Member)
7. H.E. Mar Meelis Zaia, Bishop of Australia & New Zealand, Secretary for the Holy Synod, (Member)

Chaldeans

1. H.E. Mar Gewargis Garmo, Archbishop of Mosul, (Member)

2. H.E. Mar Ibrahim Ibrahim, Bishop of USA, (Member)
3. H.E. Mar Gabriel Kassab, Archbishop of Basra, (Guest)
4. Rt. Rev. Msgr. Zuhair Toma, Patriarchal Vicar in Australia, (Member)
5. Rt. Rev. Father Sarhad Jammo, Vicar General of the Chaldean Diocese in the USA, (Member)

One was absent

6. H.E. Mar Emmanuel Delly, Patriarchal Auxiliary, (Member).

A joint statement was issued by Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV and Patriarch Mar Raphael Bidawid. They jointly consecrated the new church of Mart Mariyam in Rosalle, Chicago on August 15, 1997. The 1997 meeting framed byelaws for the Joint Committee for Unity. The joint Synodical Decree between Patriarch Raphael Bidawid and Patriarch Mar Khanania Dinkha IV signed on 15 August 1997 exhorts the believers as follows: ²⁵

We sincerely hope that the "Church of the East", restored to its historic fullness in faithfulness to the Lord, shall be an instrument for spiritual renewal, social harmony and cultural renaissance among her faithful, prompting them, once again, to bring the Good News of the Gospel to the four corners of the world for the glory of God's name.

Therefore, we call upon all of our sons and daughters to raise fervent prayers for the purpose of achieving our full ecclesiastical unity, through the patronage of the Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and our own blessed mother and the intercessions of the Apostles of the East, Mar Toma, Mar Addai and Mar Mari.

By the authority granted to us by the Holy Spirit, we declare that this "Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity" effective for both Churches from this date, the fifteenth day of August 1997, the Feast

²⁵ Full text of Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity is given as Appendix 3 in this dissertation.

of the Blessed Virgin. As a confirmation to this historic occurrence, we list our names under the names and signatures of our two venerable Patriarchs.

Prelates of both churches in addition to their Patriarchs signed this document. The prelates had discussed the draft of this statement in detail in their respective Synods. The joint committee for Unity met on 17 and 18 September 1998 at Dayr Sayyedat Al-beere in Beirut, Lebanon. This meeting appointed sub committees to meet separately. The common statement of the meeting of 1998 declared that,²⁶

Members of the Commission offer thanksgivings to God for this opportunity and his other gifts and, at the same time, thank the people, churches and the government of Lebanon who honored them with an audience with the President of the Republic of Lebanon. They also thank all those who until now have labored to make this glorious dream come true which is a heartfelt beginning for the reunification of their Church, the historical Church of the East. The Church of the East that was established in the Lands-between-Two-Rivers (Mesopotamia), that extended to the lands of the Far East lifting high the torch of living faith which became manifested realistically in various cultures and societies for many centuries.

After framing the sub committees such as

1. Ecclesiastical Formation.
2. Catechism
3. Liturgy
4. Pastoral Collaboration
5. The Laity.

The future plans were made as follows.²⁷

²⁶ The Common Statement signed by Patriarch Mar Raphael Bidavid and Patriarch Mar Khanania Dinkha IV after the meeting of 17 and 18 September 1998. Quoted from Voice of the East, Nov-Dec.1998, Trichur, p.4

²⁷ Ibid., p.5.

The participants in this meeting also decided to publish common liturgical text and compose new catechetical books based on the Sacred Scriptures and the tradition of the Church of the East. Likewise, they decreed to establish (i) the Feast of Saint Thomas as a special day of prayer for the unity of their churches, (ii) to celebrate together the Jubilee of Year 2000, (iii) to compose an Encyclopedia of the Church of the East that will present this church's history, culture, locations, literature, and discipline, and lastly, (iv) to establish a public foundation that will support these numerous Chaldean - Assyrian projects.

It is hoped that the next meeting of this committee will be held in Iraq in October 2000 following the Millennium celebrations planned to be held in Seleucia Ctesiphon.

6.7.3 Pro Oriente, Vienna

The Pro Oriente Foundation in Vienna held dialogues with the non-Chalcedonian Churches. In 1982 Pro Oriente officers had met Patriarch Mar Addai II of the ancient Assyrian Church following the old Julian calendar in Baghdad. In 1988 the Pro Oriente people met Catholicos Patriarch Mar Khanania Dinkha IV in Moscow.

Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of India, wrote letters to the Pro Oriente enquiring of the possibilities of dialogue with the Church of the East. Consequently Mar Aprem was invited to read a paper for a one day Symposium (No.59) in Vienna. **Was Nestorius a Nestorian?** was the paper of the day. Archbishop Mesrob K. Krikorian of the Armenian Church presided over the function on 18 June 1990.

The discussion that followed stressed the need for further dialogues. The speaker was the first bishop of the Church of the East to visit Pro Oriente, declared President Alfred Stirnemann. The participants, especially Alfred Stirnemann, Archbishop Krikorian and other leaders of the Pro Oriente, felt

that it was imperative to have a dialogue with the Church of the East.

An Indian Regional Symposium was held in Kottayam, Kerala from September 30 to October 4, 1993. Alfred Stirnemann, Archbishop Mesrob K. Krikorian, Prof. Mons. Philipp Harnencourt of the University of Graz, Prof. Peter Hoffrichter of Salzburg, Fr. Franz Bouven and other ecumenical leaders participated. About its impact Prof. Peter Hoffrichter writes in p.11 of Booklet No.6: (Published in Vienna, 1995)²⁸

Fr. Franz Bouven treated the reception of the Vienna Christological Formula in official agreements with the individual Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. The discussion, which followed, was one of the highlights of the whole event. The condemnation of the teachings of Nestorius in the Vienna Formula prompted Metropolitan Mar Aprem of the allegedly Nestorian Church of the East to take the floor and declare his complete agreement with the Vienna Formula, even though its condemnation of Nestorius was unjustified. This led to several people stressing the need for a dialogue with the so-called Nestorians and Catholicos Basilius Mar Thoma Mathews II spontaneously expressed his joy over Mar Aprem's declaration.

On 31 January 1994 Pro Oriente conducted its 69th Ecumenical Symposium in the House of the Diet of Lower Austria, Knights Hall in Vienna. Alfred Stirnemann referred to the Indian Regional Symposium of 1993. He spoke thus²⁹

Something new for PRO ORIENTE was the participation of the so-called Nestorians. The bishop of the old calendarian jurisdiction Mar Aprem G. Mookken of Trichur who on the 18th of June 1990 had taken the floor at the 59th Symposium of PRO ORIENTE on the very interesting subject "Was Nestorius a Nestorian?" and the priests

²⁸ *The Vienna Dialogue*, Kerala Regional Symposium, Kottayam, October 1993, Booklet No. 6, Vienna, 1995, pp.11,12.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

and lay people of the jurisdiction of the new calendarians were also present. Mar Aprem states that the Christology of the Assyrian Church was neither pro nor anti-Chalcedonian as its representatives could not attend the councils of the Roman Empire at Ephesus and Chalcedon, because there was a war between the Roman and the Persian Empires. He explained that he can fully accept the “Vienna Christological Formula”. for the same reason he, however, deplored the confirmation of the Nestorian position in the same declaration.

Note: The word used in the above line is perhaps *condemnation* and not *confirmation*.

In June 1994 Pro Oriente held their first Syriac Dialogue in Vienna. They invited the representatives from the old calendar as well as the new calendar, the representatives of the Chaldean Catholic Church, Syrian Catholic Church, Maronite Catholic Church, Syrian Orthodox Church and the churches from India such as the Syro Malabar Church, Syro Malankara Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

The second Syriac Dialogue was held in February 1996 in Vienna. The 3rd Syriac Dialogue was held on 5—13 July 1997 in Chicago. Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV addressed this assembly. A Study Seminar of the same was held in Vienna on Feb 29 to 1 March 2000. The communique of this latest meeting of Pro Oriente states:³⁰

The participants strongly encourage PRO ORIENTE to continue the most valuable initiative of a dialogue within the Syriac Tradition. For future consideration and study they suggest the following as possible topics:

- Rites which are identified and listed differently as *raze/roze* by the individual Syriac Churches (Penance, Marriage, Anointing of the sick, Holy Leaven, Myron, Sign of the Cross),

³⁰ *Communique of Pro Oriente*, dated March 2, 2000, Vienna.

- the interaction between the different liturgical traditions and their consequences,
- the theology and practice of mission in the Churches of the Syriac tradition in both historical and contemporary experience.
- Priesthood.

In conclusion, this was a unique and most useful opportunity, provided by PRO ORIENTE, for members of the different Churches of Syriac tradition to discuss and learn directly from each other about each others' understanding of the subject of the Study Seminar. It was extremely gratifying to discover the large amount of agreement between the traditions of the different Syriac Churches over essentials.

The non-official seminars conducted by the Pro-Oriente are helpful for other churches to understand the actual theological position of the Assyrian Church of the East. There is no other forum where the Syriac speaking churches of the Catholic, Oriental Orthodox and Assyrian churches (both calendarists) come around the same table

6.7.4 The Middle East Council Of Churches (MECC)

The Middle East Council of Churches held its 4th general assembly in 1985 in Nicosia, Cyprus. The Assyrian Church of the East, which was already a member of the World Council of Churches, wanted to have membership in the Middle East Council of Churches.

In 1991 the MECC appointed a committee for dialogue with the Assyrian Church. Two official dialogues were held. At the first meeting of Sept 5-6, 1991 the christological issue was studied. At the second meeting of Sept 15-20, 1992 the person and teachings of Nestorius were discussed.

An understanding was reached to give full membership to the Assyrian Church of the East. Unfortunately for MECC assembly of 1999 the General Secretary of the MECC requested the Church of the East to send an ob-

server indicating that this Church was not entitled to the membership of the MECC. The Patriarch of the Church wrote a strong letter making it clear that he was not prepared to send an observer. If any Church had claim to the full membership of the MECC it is the Assyrian Church, as it is the Church which had shed maximum blood for the faith.

The Roman Catholic Church strongly took a stand in favour of the Assyrian Church. They wanted the MECC to classify the Assyrian Church in the Catholic family, as the Assyrian Church did not fit in the other three families of the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and the Protestant. The Coptic Church objected it. The Assyrian Church cannot be included in the Catholic family, as the Assyrian Church did not have full communion with the Catholic Church.

Patriarch Schenuda of the Coptic Church vehemently opposes the membership of the Assyrian Church in the MECC as the Assyrian Church does not condemn Nestorius. The Church authorities informed the MECC that the Holy Synod of 1997 has decided to drop anathemas against Cyril of Alexandria (predecessor of Patriarch Schenuda), Severus of Antioch and any other. In the ecumenical era the anathemas have but little weight.

On Oct. 9, 1998 Patriarch Schenuda of the Coptic Church presided over the executive committee of the MECC held in Lebanon and “firmly rejected” the membership of the Assyrian Church of the East “in the grounds that it still adheres to the Nestorian heresy”.³¹

The decision to refuse the membership of MECC to the Assyrian Church was disappointing to many. His Holiness Mar Khanania Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch, during the Holy Synod meeting in Chicago beginning on 19 April, 1999, discussed with his prelates and wrote a strong worded protest letter to the MECC. Extracts are reproduced below.³²

³¹ Quoted from *The Glastonbury Bulletin*, England, December 1998.

³² Addressed to the Rev. Dr. Riad Jarjour, General Secretary of MECC with copies to Cardinal Cassidy, Patriarch Raphael Bidavid and President of MECC. Quoted from *Voice of the East*, Trichur, May - June 1999, p.9

Subsequent to so many efforts, and especially after we signed with His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 1994 the “Common Christological Declaration”, we were accepted as members of the Council within the Catholic Family. Through the membership of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Council the MECC became then the inclusive council of all the Christian Churches of the Middle East. But, the fact that, our membership in the council was revoked and at present we are invited as mere observers in the forthcoming General Assembly are very disappointing and painful occurrences for us. We feel hurt and wounded in our heart, especially because, this decision is taken by our Christian brothers and friends, living in the same homeland”.

The same letter is more emphatic in the following words: ³³

I also wish to add that for the future, we do not even have to defend or legitimate ourselves or our apostolic faith any further. Our Church belongs to the Middle East Christianity, long before any MECC member Churches arrived in the region. Our Church had so many saints, martyrs and missionaries; we suffered during the centuries for our Christian faith. There is no single Assyrian family that did not pay with its blood for the Christian faith. We are scattered all over the world as consequences of our faith. What else can be asked of us? Why should we be reduced to beggars?

6.7.5 The Dialogue With The Coptic Church.

A bilateral dialogue began between the Coptic Church and the Assyrian Church in 1994. When the Common Christological Declaration was signed at Vatican by Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV and Pope John Paul II, the Pope of Egypt moved fast. Patriarch Schenuda III of the Coptic Orthodox Church sent message to the Assyrian delegate attending the 6th General Assembly of the MECC in Limassol Cyprus (November 15-21, 1994)

³³ Ibid., p.10.

inviting him to visit Egypt and to initiate bilateral dialogue between the Assyrian Church and the Coptic Church. The delegates of the MECC assembly welcomed this move from the Coptic Church that was not considered of very friendly to the Church of the East that venerates the memory of Nestorius.

Matters moved very fast. On 13-14 January, 1995 the first official dialogue between the theologians of the Coptic Church and the Assyrian Church took place at the Coptic monastery of Amba Bishoy in the Wadi Natrun in Egypt. A draft was prepared. It did not take much time, because there was already an agreement with the Vatican. Misunderstandings were cleared. The Assyrians made it clear that they did not teach two persons in Christ. They believe in one *parsopa* only.

With great expectation the draft was sent to the holy synods of the respective churches to ratify before the Patriarchs could sign. Next month when some ecumenical leaders met at the second Pro Oriente Consultation in Vienna (22-27 Feb 1995) there was a great hope for the ratification of the draft by the two churches. The delegates of the Syrian Orthodox churches grumbled because they felt neglected that the Assyrian church went to prepare a draft with the Coptic Church, instead of the Syrian Orthodox Church which was closer as a Syriac speaking Church. They even felt that they should not continue participation in the Pro- Oriente without permission from the Patriarch in Damascus. When the Syrian Orthodox delegates telephoned the Patriarch in Damascus, he gave permission to the Syrian Orthodox delegates to continue in the Pro Oriente.

All this good start did not bear any fruit in the opposition of the Copts against the person and teachings of Nestorius from the Coptic theologians. The Coptic Orthodox Church rejected the draft. Metropolitan Amba Bishoy, a well known ecumenical leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church made it clear in the Pro Oriente Consultation in Chicago in July 1997 that the Coptic Church demands the condemnation of the person of Nestorius. The delegates of the Assyrian Church declared that their Holy Synod that met a few days earlier in that city decided to omit the anathemas against Cyril of Al-

exandria and Severus of Antioch. They explained that they did not demand in return to omit the anathemas against Nestorius by other churches. That was the end of the short-lived dialogue between the Coptic Church and the Assyrian Church.

6.7.6 Dialogue With The Syrian Orthodox Church

When the dialogue with the Coptic Church was in full swing in 1995 the Syrian Orthodox Church delegate to the Pro Oriente suggested that the delegates should write a joint appeal to the heads of their Churches to start direct dialogue between their churches. Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV discussed this letter of the delegates from the Pro Oriente meeting of Feb 1995 in the Patriarchal council of June 1996 and appointed a committee of three prelates from the Assyrian Church namely Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon, Mar Aprem Metropolitan of India and Bishop Mar Bawai Soro.

There was no action on this letter of Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV sent to Patriarch Mor Zaka Iwas in 1996 for one year. New hopes were raised when Metropolitan Aprem Aboodi Mor Timotheus of Canada, Mor Ibrahim Yohanan Gregorius of Aleppo, Syria and the new Metropolitan in America of the Syrian Orthodox Church Mor Aphrem Karim came to the residence of Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in July 1997 and handed over a letter of Patriarch Mor Zaka Iwas of Damascus naming the members of his committee for the dialogue between the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church.

Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV responded to this letter by appointing his committee of two prelates Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon and Bishop Mar Bawai Soro. The committee met briefly in March 1998 in Annaya, Lebanon after a Pro Oriente meeting. The committee could not meet in 1999. But it is hoped the committee would be active in 2000. Meanwhile Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV visited Patriarch Mor Zaka Iwas in Damascus in October 1999.

In a conference held in Melbourne, Australia on 11 July 2000 Amba Suriel, Coptic Bishop of Melbourne, read a paper prepared by Amba Bishoi, Metropolitan of Damiette, in which he emphatically stated that the Coptic Church would not have any theological discussion with the Church of the East if it did not condemn Nestorius. He also stated that there would not be any dialogue between the Assyrian Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church for the same reason.

Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV is actively involved in dialogue with other churches. In October 2000 AD it looks like the Assyrian Church of the East is likely to be ready to enter into some sort of full communion with the world wide Roman Catholic Church. And especially with the Chaldean Catholic Church. The Assyrian Church of the East never anticipates merger with any Church. It believes in its apostolic origin and proud of its missionary past.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

During 1900 - 2000 the Assyrian Church of the East suffered heavily under persecutions. They were attacked often by the Kurds until the First World War (1914 - 1918). They lived in their own land with fear of Kurds.

They were expecting protection from Britain. For the missionaries of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian mission were working in Kurdistan in Turkey and Urmia in Persia. The political protection that the Assyrians were expecting never came. The British missionaries explained to the Assyrians that the purpose of their mission was only ecclesiastical and not political.

The relation with the Anglican Mission ended with the end of the First World War in 1918 AD. The British accommodated the Assyrian refugees in Baquba Refugee Camp near Baghdad when they had to flee for their life from Turkey in 1918.

The assassination of the Patriarch (Mar Benyamin Shimun) in March 1918 at Salamus and the death of his successor and younger brother Mar Poulouse Shimun at a young age of 27 on May 9, 1920¹ which necessitated the consecration of their 12-year-old nephew as Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun added to the problem of the Assyrians.

The massacre of the Assyrians at Simel in August 1933 was another tragedy. The Assyrians lost all hopes of a bright future when their young Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun² was exiled to Cyprus. When Mar Eshai Shimun moved from Cyprus to England and then to settle in America in 1940 the picture of the Assyrian church was changing.

¹ Poulouse was born in 1893, along with his twin brother Zaya (d. 1947), as a younger brother of Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun.

² Mar Eshai Shimun was born in 1908 and was assassinated on 6 November, 1975. He was only 25 years old when he was exiled from Iraq to Cyprus in August 1933.

From 1933 to 1975 the Assyrian Church did not have much progress. The Metropolitan in India, Mar Abimalek Timotheus died in Trichur on 30 April 1945. Although the Indian Church got a Metropolitan (Mar Thoma Darmo from Khabour, Syria) in 1952 the church in India went into many problems after a period of about ten years.³

The rift between Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan and his consecrator Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun spread into Syria, Iraq, America, Australia, etc. The adoption of the Gregorian calendar in 1964 made the “suspension” of Mar Thoma Darmo even worse.

The unity in India that took place in November 1995 gives a hope for the progress of this Church at least in India. Even in other parts of the world it created a longing for a peaceful settlement of this unfortunate “calendar” issue.

The Chaldean - Assyrian dialogue is an attempt to return to the *status quo* of 1552 AD when John Sulaqa decided to go to Vatican to be consecrated Patriarch of the Chaldeans. Now many in both Churches feel that the Church of the East is an adequate expression to include both the Chaldeans and the Assyrians.

The name used in India is the “Chaldean Syrian Church” because Mar Rocos⁴ and Mar Elia Mellus⁵ served as Metropolitans in Trichur during 1861- 62 and 1874 -82 respectively. Both these prelates returned to Iraq and served the Chaldean Church. Could “Chaldean Assyrian Church of the East” be an adequate expression, if these two factions created in 1552 AD could reunite in the 21st century?

³ Mar Thoma Darmo (1904-1969) arrived in India in June 1952. He had to face problems during his last six years in India (1962-1968).

⁴ Mar Thoma Rocos Metropolitan came to India in 1861 and was forced to return to Iraq in 1862.

⁵ Mar Yohannan Elia Mellus Metropolitan came to India in 1874 and returned to Iraq in 1882.

The Assyrian Church that was larger than the Chaldean (Catholic) Church till the beginning of the 20th century has been reduced to minority status in comparison to the Chaldean community sometime in the beginning of this century. Possibilities of higher education in Rome for the Chaldean clergy, assistance from the French Lazarist mission etc. helped the Chaldean Church to grow.

The Church of the East in India (locally known as Chaldean Syrian Church) does not have any special official dialogue with the Syro Malabar Church. But these Churches work in close co-operation with each other in India.

The Archbishop of Chengannassery of the Syro Malabar Church in India, Mar Joseph Powathil is a member of the Pro Oriente Commission of Syriac Churches. Thus Pro Oriente, Vienna has provided various opportunities for inter action between these Churches.

The Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue (MCTD) includes Fr. Mathew Vellanikal, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Chengannassery of Syro Malabar Church, as its member appointed by the Pontifical Commission for Christian Unity, Vatican in the Committee. In that capacity he works with the Metropolitan of the Church of the East in India, who is the co-Chairman of the Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue.

Although such opportunities help further co-operation and understanding between the Syro Malabar Church and the Church of the East in India, it does not lead to any unilateral action on the part of the Church of the East in India. Because the Church of the East in India considers it an integral part of the Assyrian Church of the East universal under the headship of His Holiness Mar Khanania Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch at present residing in Morton Grove near Chicago, USA. As the Church of the East in India based in Thrissur does not have any special entity, there is no possibility of this Church attempting for unity with the Syro Malabar Church. At the same time as the relation between the universal Assyrian Church and Roman Catholic Church improves further and if it can lead to full communion be-

tween these two ancient Churches, the co-operation between Syro Malabar Church and the Assyrian Church of the East in India can become a reality.

Geographically and linguistically there will be a natural consequence. The Seminarians of the Church of the East in India can be trained in the Seminaries in Kerala belonging to the Syro Malabar Church.

If there were no Mar Narsai Press, in Trichur, India, not only the Church of the East but also the use of the Syriac language would have suffered. Now the books printed in the Mar Narsai Press in India such as Liturgy of Qurbana, Baptism, Marriage, Burial, and blessing of the home etc. are in use all over the world.

Assyrian people used the Julian calendar printed in India since 1926 until 1995 wherever the Assyrians live. Even in Russia where there was no worshipping Assyrian community till recently, the Assyrians looked at the Assyrian calendar to know the dates of the religious festivals which their forefathers used in the "old" countries which meant Syria, Iraq or Iran. After Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun changed the calendar to the Gregorian reckoning in 1964 his followers did not use the calendar printed at the Mar Narsai Press.

An observation made by John Joseph in the end of his book *The Nestorians and their Muslim Neighbours* is worth repeating here after nearly half a century. He is writing about the strength of the Catholic Church.⁶

With its worldwide organisation and political prestige, with its educational institutions and educated priests, the Catholic Church, already strong in the Middle East, continues to attract Orthodox Christians into its fold. Most probably it will entirely absorb the remnants of the Nestorian Church which to its faithful few is known by its proud but once-fitting name "The Old Church of the East".

⁶ John Joseph., op. cit., p.236.

In India, this Church has only 30,000 members out of the seven million known as Syrian Christians or St. Thomas Christians. Ethnically they are Indians and not Assyrians. In Turkey, it is not found. The churches are deserted. The believers moved down to Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk, etc.

Even in Iran the Assyrians left their traditional homes and moved down to cities like Teheran. There are several Churches near Urmia (Rizaieh), which are today monuments of the past. Some of the relatives in America help to renovate some of these old churches. But no priest is living in the neighbourhood. The priest has to come from Urmia to conduct some memorial service once a year in such old Churches.

But the number of the Assyrians is increasing in USA and Canada. There is considerable growth in the strength of the Assyrian community in Australia and New Zealand. In Europe too the numbers are going up. In Greece there are 2,500 Assyrians and a resident priest is appointed in April 2000.

The Church of the East in 1900 AD was a pro-Anglican Church and was opposed to the Chaldean Catholic Church and the Vatican. Now in 2000 AD the Church of the East is a pro-Vatican Church. The millennium celebrations jointly observed by the Assyrian Church and the Catholic Chaldean Church in October 2000 AD in Seleucia–Ctesiphon near Baghdad and at Rabban Hurmizd Monastery at Alkosh near Mosul, under the leadership of His Holiness Mar Khanania Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East and His Beatitude Mar Raphael Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church is a clear indication of a closer walk between these two Churches which were one and the same prior to 1553 AD.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the Assyrian territory was a corner of eastern Turkey and northwest in Persia. Now at the beginning of the 21st century the Assyrians are scattered all over the world such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Greece, Sweden, England, Germany, U.S.A., Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

APPENDIX 1

CHRONOLOGY

Important Events Of 1900 To 2000

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1900 November 16 | Death of Mar Abdisho Thondanat Metropolitan, Trichur. |
| 1901 | The Assyrians in Urmia rebelled against their bishop Mar Yonan who was under the influence of the Russians. |
| 1902 | W.A. Wigram comes to Urmia as a missionary of the Anglicans. |
| 1903 March 15 | Mar Benyamin Shimun is consecrated Bishop and Metropolitan by Patriarch Mar Rewil Shimun. |
| 1903 March 29 | The death of Patriarch Mar Ruwel Shimun. |
| 1903 April 12 | Mar Benyamin Shimun is consecrated Patriarch by Metropolitan Mar Is'haq Khananisho. |
| 1903 October middle | Archbishop of Canterbury's school moved from Urmia to Van with newly ordained priest Awimalek as teacher. |
| 1904 March | B.W. Labaree, son of American missionary, was killed. |
| 1905 | Some Assyrians left the Russian Church and joined the United Lutheran Church of America. |
| 1905 | An epidemic of cholera interrupted the school functioning in Van. |
| 1906 | The Evangelical Association for the Advancement of the Nestorian Church founded in Berlin, employed an Assyrian priest who had Lutheran training in Germany. |

1907 December 15	Archdeacon Abimalek consecrated by the name Mar Timotheus Metropolitan of Malabar and India.
1908 February 27	Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan assumes charge in India.
1908 May 2	Consecration of Qasha Geevargis Abuna at Kochanes as Mar Elia, Bishop of Alkosh.
1909 February 4	Bishop Mar Elia escaped from Mosul in the disguise of a servant lady.
1910 September 14	Rabbi Dr. W.H. Browne, Anglican missionary died in Kudshanis and was buried by Mar Elia.
1911 June 15	Cor episcopa Michael Augustine died in India.
1912 July 15	Rev. Owen F. Spearing, the last priest to join the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission, reached Urmia.
1913 March 12	Archbishop appointed Rev.G.J. MacGillivray the head of the Mission.
1914 August 10	Consecration of Yosip Khananishu as Episcopa.
1915 February	Shooting of Bishop Mar Dinkha of Tergewar along with about 40 Assyrians.
1915 May 24	The Russian troops re-took the Urmia town.
1915 June	Patriarch Mar Shimun was feted by the Russian Commander in Salamas, rumours spread that Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun would join the Russians.
1916 May	Russian forces occupied Urmiyah, Rwanduz etc with the help of the Assyrians who served as advance guards and scouts to the Russians.
1917 end	With the revolution in Russia, the army withdraws from Persia.

- 1918 March 16 Murdering Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun and his 45 escorts by Simko Agha, the Kurd.
- 1918 March 23 Mar Poulose Shimun was consecrated Patriarch by Mar Isaac Khnanisho Metropolitan, Mar Yosip episcopa (nephew of Mar Isaac), Mar Elia of Alkosh and Mar Zaia Sargis of Jelu.
- 1918 Death of Mar Isaac Khananisho on his journey to Baquba.
- 1919 April Mar Yosip Khananisho promoted Metropolitan at the age of 26.
- 1919 April Surma, sister of the Patriarch, came to England to receive the O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire) Award from the King of Britain, George V.
- 1920 May 9 The death of Mar Paulus Shimun in Baquba and was buried in the Armenian Church in Shorja, Baghdad.
- 1920 June 20 Mar Eshai Shimun consecrated Patriarch to succeed his two uncles, Mar Benyamin and Mar Paulus Shimun at the Anglican church of St.George in Baghdad.
- 1920 October 19 Agha Patrus lead 6,000 armed Assyrians on an expedition to establish an Assyrian nation; it failed.
- 1921 Around the end of the year W.A.Wigram's appointment terminated, thus the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission begun in June 1886 ended.
- 1921 Bishop Mar Elia Aboona rejoined Chaldean church.
- 1922 The American missionaries returned to start their work near Urmiyah area.

- 1923 Lausanne conference on Near Eastern Affairs. The signing of Lausanne Treaty.
- 1924 April Mar Timotheus Metropolitan of India left England after a stay of about nine months (August 1923 – April 1924) for U.S.A. seeking help for The Assyrians.
- 1925 April 18 The Marth Maryam Cathedral in Trichur and its properties were restored to Mar Timotheus Metropolitan under the “Award” of Mr. C. W. E. Cotton.
- 1926 January 13 A treaty between Great Britain and Iraq was signed.
- 1926 Mar Narsai Press was started in Trichur to print books in Syriac language.
- 1927 August Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun returns to Mosul, Iraq after his study of two years in England.
- 1927 September 13 Ordination of Deacon Joseph Kellaita, the founder of the Assyrian Press and schools, as priest.
- 1928 Mar Timotheus Metropolitan returns from Mosul to India after disagreements with Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun.
- 1929 Deacon Gevargis Benyamin of Ashitha, one of the best students of Rev. Joseph Kellaita arrived in Trichur to teach seminary students for 4 years and to print liturgical books.
- 1930 Shaykh Muhamed invaded Iraq from his exile in Persian territory.
- 1931 The Assyrian Levies assisted the Iraqi troops and the British Royal Air Force until Shaykh Muhamed surrendered.

- 1932 September 22 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun sent a petition to Northern Iraq Commissions requesting autonomy for Assyrians.
- 1933 August 11 The Assyrians about 300 men and boys were machine-gunned at the village Simail under the leadership of General Bar Sidqi.
- 1934 January 17 Historic meeting of Mar Timotheus and Mahatma Gandhi in Trichur, South India.
- 1935 Assyrians settle down in Khabour valley in Syria. About 2,100 Assyrians.
- 1936 4,000 more Assyrians joined Khabour area. 2,500 more joined Khabour area.
- 1937 September 29 The League council decided not to shift these Assyrians from Khabour area in Syria. It was recognized as a permanent settlement.
- 1938 September Iraq government sent a report to the League Council stating the Assyrians were not more than their neighbours.
- 1939 August 28 Mar Timotheus ordains 4 deacons (the last batch of his clergy)
- 1940 Patriarch Mar Shimun shifts his residence to United States of America, settles down in Chicago.
- 1941 May The Assyrians all alone smashed the Nazi inspired revolt in Iraq.
- 1942 July 12 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun sent telegram to Mar Timotheus in Trichur to send him certified copies of his delegation to America in 1925 for the purpose of the church property case in Chicago.
- 1943 Mar Timotheus Metropolitan in India began a

friendly attitude towards The Roman Catholics (Syro-Malabar) of Trichur with whom he was not on good terms as a result of Trichur Church case of 1911 – 1925.

- 1944 December 28 Mar Timotheus Metropolitan conducts his final ordination on Deacon P.T. John as priest.
- 1945 April 30 Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan of India died in Trichur.
- 1946 The Indian Church was without a Metropolitan after the death of Mar Timotheus. Patriarch was busy in Chicago. U.S.A. trying to help Assyrians scattered in many places after the Second World War (1939 – 1945). The Patriarchal family continued to live in Myrton, Cyprus.
- 1947 August 15 British Government grants Independence to India.
- 1948 April 16 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun wrote “An Appeal to the Christian people of America”.
- 1948 May 12 Counter response by the people in Khabour, Syria.
- 1949 February 6 The “Al Ittihed al Lubnani” newspaper of Beirut, Lebanon, published news against Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun.
- 1950 January 8 The Church of Mar Kardagh Sahda is consecrated in Baghdad.
- 1950 November 18 The death of Bishop Mar Yalda Yoalaha in Barwar.
- 1951 May 12 The death of Bishop Mar Zaia Sargis in Baghdad.
- 1951 May 14 Archdeacon Esho Beth Mar Sargis is consecrated Bishop by Metropolitan Mar Yosip Khananisho.
- 1952 May 4 Consecration of Mar Thoma Darmo as Metro-

- politan by Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun in Turlock, California, U.S.A.
- 1952 June 20 Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan assumes charge in Trichur, India.
- 1952 August 23 The death of Rev. Yousep De Kelaitha.
- 1952 August 31 The church of Mart Mariam is consecrated in Dohuk, Iraq.
- 1953 April 19 Rev. Philipos of Rawanduz is consecrated Bishop Youkhanan Philipose in Baghdad by Metropolitan Mar Yousep Khananisho for the diocese of Rezaieh (Urmia) and all Iran.
- 1953 August Patriarchal family of Mar Shimun moves from Cyprus to Ealing, London, England.
- 1954 January 10 Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan ordains 5 priests and 9 deacons at Trichur.
- 1955 May 21 The Iraqi levies were disbanded. The Assyrians joined the Iraqi army.
- 1955 Bishop Mar Elia Aboona died a Chaldean Catholic at the age of 93.
- 1956 May 20 Dedication of Seminary in India.
- 1957 July 14 Andrius Beth Mar Youalaha is consecrated Bishop for Barwar.
- 1957 Dec 25 Rev. Khanania (later Patriarch) is sent to Iran from Iraq.
- 1958 September 21 Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan conducts his second batch of ordinations in Trichur. Mar Poulouse (who became a bishop a decade later) was one of the deacons ordained on that day.
- 1959 June 24 The Cathedral of Mar Zaia the blessed is consecrated in Baghdad.

- 1960 Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan wrote pamphlets against hereditary succession in the episcopal families.
- 1961 November Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun visits New Delhi for World Council of Churches assembly. Patriarch visits Kerala till January 8.
- 1962 January 8 Patriarch lays foundation stone for Mar Sleeva Church in Chullikal, Kochi, Kerala, India.
- 1962 February 11 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun consecrates Rev. Khanania as Bishop Mar Dinkha of Iran.
- 1963 July 2 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun wrote to Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan to appear before him in San Francisco to answer some charges.
- 1964 January 10 The split in the Assyrian Church became real when Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun sent a letter of suspension to Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan.
- 1965 June 13 Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan ordains four priests, one deacon and three sub deacons in Trichur. Two priests ordained on that day became bishops in September 1968 namely Mar Poulouse and Mar Aprem.
- 1966 December 19 Bishop Mar Esho Sargis died in London. He was laid to rest in the Cathedral of Mar Zaia the blessed in Baghdad on December 28.
- 1967 February to March Mar Khanania Dinkha, bishop of Iran, visits India.
- 1968 March 2 Consecration of Mar Yosip Sargis Episcopa by Mar Yosip Khananisho Metropolitan.
- 1968 July 17 Revolution in Iraq. Baath party comes to power.

- 1968 July 28 Consecration of Mar Narsai de Baz and Mar Yohannan Avraham as Bishops by Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun in Beirut, Lebanon.
- 1968 September 7 Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan arrives in Baghdad.
- 1968 September 13 Rev. K.A. Paul was consecrated as Episcopa Poulouse Mar Poulouse.
- 1968 September 15 Poulouse Mar Poulouse episcopa ordains some clergy including Mar Addai (later Patriarch) as Qaroya, sub deacon, Deacon and priest.
- 1968 September 21 Rev. George Mookan consecrated Episcopa and on September 29 Metropolitan by the name Mar Aprem.
- 1968 September 22 Archdeacon Geevarghese Shleemon consecrated as Episcopa & Metropolitan by the name Mar Addai.
- 1969 September 7 Mar Thoma Darmo dies in St. Raphael's Hospital, Baghdad.
- 1969 December Mar Narsai Thoma of Kirkuk and Mar Thoma Geevarghese of Nineveh were consecrated by Metropolitan Mar Addai.
- 1970 April 24 Patriarch Mar Shimun returns to Iraq after his exile in 1933.
- 1971 August 15 C.C. Timothy was made archdeacon in Baghdad.
- 1971 September 10 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun visits Baghdad again.
- 1971 October 10 Mar Timotheus (former Archdeacon C. C. Timothy) consecrated Metropolitan in Mar Zaia Cathedral, Baghdad by Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun.
- 1972 February 20 Mar Addai Geevarghese consecrated in Baghdad as Patriarch Mar Addai II by Mar Narsai Thoma

- Metropolitan and Mar Thoma Geevarghese Metropolitan of the old calendar group.
- 1972 April 23 Iraq government grants cultural rights to minorities.
- 1972 October 2 Mar Thoma Geevarghese Metropolitan of Ninevah visited India and ordained two deacons.
- 1973 March 2 Mar Aprim Khamis and Mar Daniel Yakob were consecrated bishops in Iraq by Mar Yosip Khananesho Metropolitan.
- 1973 June 17 The death of Bishop Mar Andrius Yoalaha of Barwar.
- 1973 August 16 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun's marriage in Seattle.
- 1974 January 14 Malik Yacob Ismael died in Baghdad while negotiating settlement for the Assyrian problem with the government of Iraq.
- 1975 November 6 Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun was assassinated in San Jose, California, U.S.A.
- 1976 January 1 Bishop Poulouse Mar Poulouse returned to India after 7 years studies in U.S.A.
- 1976 October 17 Mar Dinkha, Bishop of Iran, was consecrated as Catholicos Patriarch in England.
- 1976 October 17 - 21 The First Holy Synod under Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV six prelates present at St. Paul's Priory, Alton, England.
- 1977 April, May & June Mar Aprem Metropolitan visited U.S.A., Iraq etc. and talked about unity with Mar Aprem Khamis, Patriarch Mar Addai II, Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Kirkuk, Colonel Yosip d' Malik Khoshaba.
- 1977 July 3 Death of Mar Yosip Khananisho, Metropolitan in Baghdad.

- 1978 April 11 – 22 Second Holy Synod under Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in Baghdad, five prelates present.
- 1979 April 7 The Court Receivers in Trichur returned the Church properties to Mr. P.V. Paul, one of 4 Trustees when the Court had taken control in 1967 at the time of Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan.
- 1980 Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV met Patriarch Mar Addai II for discussion in Baghdad, Iraq regarding the unity of the calendars.
- 1981 June 14 Mar Gevarghese Sliva Metropolitan was consecrated in Chicago by Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV for the archdiocese of Iraq.
- 1982 June 22-30 Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV attended Consultation of the Orthodox churches in Kiev, USSR
- 1982 September Adam Benjamin Jr. a 3rd term US Congressman from Gary, Indiana, aged 47, died. He was the first Assyrian to serve the United States House of Representatives.
- 1983 July 24 to Aug 10 World Council of Churches 6th assembly at Vancouver, Canada. Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis, Rev. Ashur Soro (later Bishop) and Deacon Lawrence Namato represented the Assyrian Church of the East.
- 1984 February The first Holy Synod under Patriarch Mar Addai II. Five prelates present.
- 1984 October Both Patriarchs met in Chicago for unity talks with Mar Aprem of India and Mar Aprim of Chicago participating.
- 1984 October 14 Mar Bawai Soro and Mar Meelis Joseph Zaia were consecrated Bishops in Chicago.

- 1984 Oct 15 to Nov 2 The third Holy Synod under Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV held in Chicago, U.S.A. Nine prelates under Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV. The following week the Patriarch went to Rome as the guest of Vatican for ecumenical discussion
- 1985 April 14 Bishop Mar Yohannan Avraham of Syria died.
- 1985 October 31 Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV arrived in Baghdad for a visit of 54 days. Talks for unity of two calendar groups continued at various levels.
- 1986 Attempts were made to hold a common Synod of two calendar groups in Baghdad. Patriarch Mar Addai II and Mar Geevarghese Sliva Metropolitan jointly requested Iraqi government to grant visas to bishops from India, U.S.A. etc.
- 1987 August 15 Dedication of St. Mary's Church at Hanwell, near Ealing, London, U. K., by H. H. Mar Dinkha IV.
- 1988 June Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV visited U.S.S.R. for the 1000 anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church. He made arrangements for constructing Assyrian Church in Russia.
- 1989 April Case in the Supreme Court in Sydney, Australia was decided in favour of Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia.
- 1990 January 15 to 19 The fourth Holy Synod under Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV. Eight prelates present in Baghdad.
- 1990 March 19 to 27 Synod of Old Calendar under Patriarch Mar Addai II met in Baghdad.
- 1990 June 3 Mar Emmanuel Rehana was consecrated bishop in Chicago.
- 1991 January Visit of Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV to India and unity talks.

Assyrian Church of the East

- 1992 July 5 Mar Yakob Daniel consecrated bishop for Syria by Patriarch Mar Addai II at Baghdad.
- 1993 June 11 Mar Emmanuel Elia was consecrated by Patriarch Mar Addai II at Baghdad.
- 1994 July 18 to 29 The fifth Holy Synod of Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in Sydney, Australia. Six prelates present.
- 1994 July 24 Consecration of Mar Odisho Oraham as Bishop of Europe.
- 1994 November 11 Signing of the Common Christological Declaration by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV.
- 1995 November 13 Unity of the two calendar groups in India.
- 1995 November 22-24 First Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue in Rome.
- 1996 October 10-12 2nd Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue in Adma, Lebanon
- 1996 November 29 “Joint Patriarchal Statement” at Smithfield, Michigan, U.S.A. Delegations meeting under Patriarch Mar Raphael Bidavid and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV.
- 1997 June 23 to 1 July The sixth Holy Synod under Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV met in Chicago. Eleven prelates present.
- 1997 August 13-14 The first Chaldean - Assyrian Dialogue, Chicago.
- 1997 August 15 Consecration of Church at Rosalle, near Chicago.
- 1998 March 24 Death of Bishop Poulouse Mar Poulouse aged 56 in Madras.
- 1998 Sept. 17 & 18 2nd Chaldean –Assyrian dialogue, Lebanon.

- 1999 April 19 to 27 Seventh Holy Synod under Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV met in Chicago. Nine prelates present.
- 1999 October 11 Consecrating Bishop Mar Aprim Athniel in Hassake, Syria.
- 1999 October 25 Consecrating Bishop Mar Is'haq Yosip in Iraq.
- 1999 December 25 Andreos, father of Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, died in San Jose, California, aged 91.
- 2000 January 19 to 31 His Holiness Mar Khanania Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch made his apostolic visit to India.
- 2000 June 26 to 30 The Assyrian Church in Sydney took active part in holding the 8th Symposium Syriacum held in the University of Sydney, Australia.
- 2000 Oct. 12 to 14 Sixth Annual Meeting of the Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue (MCTD), now changed to Joint Committee for Theological Dialogue (JCTD) was held in Arezzo, near Florence in Italy.
- 2000 Oct. 23 to 31 Millennium celebrations in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, Rabban Hormizd (Alkosh near Mosul) and other places of Iraq under the leadership of Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV and Chaldean Patriarch Raphael Bet David.

APPENDIX 2

COMMON CHRISTOLOGICAL DECLARATION BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

His Holiness John Paul II, Bishop of Rome and Pope of the Catholic Church, and His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, give thanks to God who has prompted them to this new brotherly meeting.

Both of them consider this meeting as a basic step on the way towards the full communion to be restored between their Churches. They can indeed, from now on, proclaim together before the world their common faith in the mystery of the Incarnation.

As heirs and guardians of the faith received from the Apostles as formulated by our common Fathers in the Nicene Creed, we confess one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten of the Father from all eternity who, in The fullness of time, came down from heaven and became man for our salvation. The Word of God, second person of the Holy Trinity, became incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit in assuming from the holy Virgin Mary a body animated by a rational soul, with which he was indissolubly united from the moment of his conception.

Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man, perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity, consubstantial with the Father and consubstantial with us in all things but sin. His divinity and his humanity are united in one person, without confusion or change, without division or

separation. In him has been preserved the difference of the natures of divinity and humanity, with all their properties, faculties and operations. But far from constituting “one and another”, the divinity and humanity are united in the person of the same and unique Son of God and Lord Jesus Christ, who is the object of a single adoration.

Christ therefore is not an “ordinary man” whom God adopted in order to reside in him and inspire him, as in the righteous ones and the prophets. But the same God the Word, begotten of his Father before all worlds without beginning according to his divinity, was born of a mother without a father in the last times according to his humanity, the humanity to which the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth always was that of the Son of God himself. That is the reason why the Assyrian Church of the East is praying the Virgin Mary as “the Mother of Christ our God and Saviour”. In the light of this same faith the Catholic tradition addresses the Virgin Mary as “the Mother of God” and also as “the Mother of Christ”. We both recognize the legitimacy and rightness of these expressions of the same faith and we both respect the preference of each Church in her liturgical life and piety.

This is the unique faith that we profess in the mystery of Christ. The controversies of the past led to anathemas, bearing on persons and on formulas. The Lord’s Spirit permits us to understand better today that the divisions brought about in this way were due in large part to misunderstandings.

Whatever our christological divergences have been, we experience ourselves united today in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God who became man so that we might become children of God by his grace. We wish from now on to witness together to this faith in the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, proclaiming it in appropriate ways to our contemporaries, so that the world may believe in the Gospel of salvation.

The mystery of the Incarnation which we profess in common is not an abstract and isolated truth. It refers to the Son of God sent to save us. The economy of salvation, which has its origin in the mystery of communion of

the Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is brought to its fulfillment through the sharing in this communion, by grace, within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Spirit.

Believers become members of this Body through the sacrament of Baptism, through which, by water and the working of the Holy Spirit, they are born again as new creatures. They are confirmed by the seal of the Holy Spirit who bestows the sacrament of Anointing. Their communion with God and among themselves is brought to full realization by the celebration of the unique offering of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist. This communion is restored for the sinful members of the Church when they are reconciled with God and with one another through the sacrament of Forgiveness. The sacrament of ordination to the ministerial priesthood in the apostolic succession assures the authenticity of the faith, the sacraments and the communion in each local Church.

Living by this faith and these sacraments, it follows as a consequence that the particular Catholic churches and the particular Assyrian churches can recognize each other as sister Churches. To be full and entire, communion presupposes the unanimity concerning the content of the faith, the sacraments and the constitution of the Church. Since this unanimity for which we aim has not yet been attained, we cannot unfortunately celebrate together the Eucharist, which is the sign of the ecclesial communion already fully restored.

Nevertheless, the deep spiritual communion in the faith and the mutual trust already existing between our Churches entitle us from now on to consider witnessing together to the Gospel message and co-operating in particular pastoral situations, including especially the areas of catechesis and the formation of future priests.

In thanking God for having made us rediscover what already unites us in the faith and the sacraments, we pledge ourselves to do every thing possible

to dispel the obstacles of the past which still prevent the attainment of full communion between our II Churches, so that we can better respond to the Lord's call for the unity of his own, a unity which has of course to be expressed visibly. To overcome these obstacles, we now establish a Mixed Committee for theological dialogue between the Catholic and the Assyrian Church of the East.

Given at Saint Peter's, on 11 November 1994

Joannes Paulus II

Catholicos Mar Dinkha IV

APPENDIX 3

“JOINT SYNODAL DECREE FOR PROMOTING UNITY” Between The Assyrian Church Of The East And The Chaldean Catholic Church

1. In the service of our Lord and the People of God, we, the bishops of the two branches of the ancient “*Church of the East*,” declare that the noble quest for restoring Christian unity remains, for us and for our Churches, a profound Christian obligation. Our Lord’s Prayer for the unity of His followers prompts in us, today, a deep desire to reach peacefully and fraternally the full communion with all other Christians in the one holy Church of Christ. Seeking to implement the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the scope of our responsibility, we, in our respective Churches, realize that the actual meaning of Jesus’ prayer “*that all may be one*” (Jn. 17:21-23) can be fulfilled factually as we strive to restore the unity of the Church of the East, as known by our common forefathers.

2. The basic theological agreement between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, as articulated in the “*Common Christological Declaration*”, signed at the Vatican, on 11 November 1994, by Their Holinesses Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, has cleared the way for the Chaldean and the Assyrian Churches to initiate a process of dialogue and collaboration toward the goal of unity.

3. With the same spirit and purpose in mind, the two heads of our Churches, Their Holinesses Mar Dinkha IV and Mar Raphael I Bidawid met, with their respective delegations, in Southfield, Michigan (USA), on 29 November 1996, inaugurating officially the process of dialogue and collaboration; and, in a “*Joint Patriarchal Statement*”, they called upon their churches to rally behind them for the success of this noble purpose, and for their Holy Synods to formulate concrete plans toward the realization of the goal of unity.

4. We, the Fathers of both Holy Synods, wholeheartedly respond to the call of our Patriarchs, which is ultimately the call of the Lord himself, and declare that we join them in this course toward our common destiny, totally endorsing their proposals as formulated in their joint statement. Consequently, we adopt the following measures in the quest for unity:

Close collaboration in the area of catechesis, particularly in training of catechists and in the development of related teaching material collaboration in the preparation and printing of liturgical books. The establishment of an ecclesial education institute in the Chicago-Detroit region, and possibly wherever members of both communities exist, for the purpose of training future priests, deacons and catechists from both Churches. This institute shall also offer continuing religious education to the active clergy of both Churches. for the fulfilment of the general theological program – in addition to in-house formation program – the institute shall reach a suitable arrangement with appropriate Catholic universities and/or institutions in the locality where the institute exists.

The formulation of a joint and common attitude emphasizing the usage of the Aramaic mother tongue, in both of its classic and vernacular forms, in liturgical ceremonies as well as in cultural endeavours of both Churches.

The development of pastoral programs and educational projects as expression of ecclesial and cultural collaboration between the two churches.

The development of a wide range of other activities and programs through which the faithful of both the Assyrian and the Chaldean Churches will become prepared to accept, as a common enrichment of their “Church of the East”, the variety of particular practices that have been developed in both Churches during the period of separation. The characteristics of the authentic heritage of the ancient “Church of the East” shall be a basis for evaluation and a point of reference in such endeavour. Nevertheless, we shall consider diversity, within agreed and recognized limits, as an enrichment benefiting all the children of this Church.

5. To implement the above approved plan, we hereby decree that a “*Joint Commission for Unity*” (JCU) shall be constituted, according to a special statute approved by both patriarchs, to be composed of twelve members selected from both Churches – six from each side. Since the “*Common Christological Declaration*”(CCD) is the basic foundation for the collaboration between our two churches, all questions related to the areas of dogmatic and fundamental theology shall be reserved to the “*Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue*” (MCTD) that has been formed accordingly between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East.

6. Looking with fraternal understanding to our past and directing our hearts with trust and hope to the future, we commit ourselves and offer public testimony of the shared love and respect between our Churches at the present. Thus, we, mutually and reciprocally, declare that we recognize in each other, as living today in our Churches, the same apostolic succession, sacramentality and Christian witness. Therefore, we call upon our clergy and faithful everywhere to interact as brothers and sisters, founding their relationship upon Christian charity and employing evangelical principles of fraternal equality and social justice, in and throughout the testimony of their individual and communal lives.

7. Recognising in both of our Churches the binding unity of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, that we share, as well as our common liturgical and theological heritage taking pride in the same Fathers, Doctors of the Church, acknowledging the same shared ancestry and culture, we nevertheless recognise the existence of actual differences between our churches that have been formed during the period of separation. Therefore, for the sake of being truthful with each other and toward our people, we respectively declare our basic intents and together formulate the following principles for dialogue:

Whereas the Assyrian Church of the East sees that the preservation of her ecclesial identity as expressed in her liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony as well as her Mesopotamian-Aramaic culture and the recognition of her freedom and self-governance are principles that must

be preserved continuously throughout the process of dialogue and in any achieved model of unity; and

Whereas, in like manner, the Chaldean Catholic Church sees that while preservation of the same above-mentioned ecclesial identity as expressed in her liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony as well as her Mesopotamian-Aramaic culture must be maintained, the adaptation of that patrimony to existing regional and cultural conditions and the preservation of her full communion with the Roman See must be basic principles continuously maintained throughout the process of dialogue and in any achieved model of unity.

Therefore, since some of our basic stands are distinct, both Holy Synods ratify the need for further dialogue and more involved collaboration between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church, and, in due time and manner, between them jointly and the Roman See, in order to bring about unity between the Assyrian and the Chaldean Churches.

8. We sincerely hope that the “*Church of the East*”, restored to its historic fullness in faithfulness to the Lord, shall be an instrument for spiritual renewal, social harmony and cultural renaissance among her faithful, prompting them, once again, to bring the Good News of the Gospel to the four corners of the world for the glory of God’s name.

9. Therefore, we call upon all of our sons and daughters to raise fervent prayers for the purpose of achieving our full ecclesiastical unity, through the patronage of the Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and our own blessed mother and the intercessions of the Apostles of the East, Mar Toma, Mar Addai and Mar Mari.

10. By the authority granted to us by the Holy Spirit, we declare that this “*Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity*” effective for both Churches from this date, the fifteenth day of August 1997, the Feast of the Blessed Virgin. As a confirmation to this historic occurrence, we list our names under the names and signatures of our two venerable Patriarchs.

Mar Raphael I Bidawid
Catholicos Patriarch
Chaldean Catholic Church

Mar Dinkha IV
Catholicos Patriarch
Assyrian Church of the East

Members Of Both Holy Synods

Chaldean

1. Mar Emmanuel Delly,
Patriarchal Auxiliary
2. Mar Andre Sana,
Archbishop of Kirkuk
3. Mar Abdulahad Sana,
Bishop of Alqosh
4. Mar Youhanna Issaye, (died)
Retired Archbishop of Iran
5. Mar Stephane Babaca,
Retired Archbishop of Arbil
6. Mar Hanna Kello,
Bishop of Amadia & Zakho
7. Mar Paul Karatas,
Archbishop of Diarbakir
8. Mar Hanna Zora,
Archbishop of Ahwaz

Assyrian

1. Mar Narsai Debaz,
Archbishop of Lebanon, Syria,
Europe & Patriarchal Vicar
2. Mar Timotheus, Metropolitan
Patriarchal Representative in India
3. Mar Aprem,
Archbishop of India
4. Mar Gewargis Sliwa
Archbishop of Iraq & Russia
5. Poulouse Mar Poulouse,
Bishop of Trichur
(died 24 March 1998)
6. Mar Aprim Khamis,
Bishop of Eastern USA
7. Mar Bawai Soro,
Bishop of Seattle, General
Secretary, of CIRED
8. Mar Meelis Zaia,
Bishop of Australia & New
Zealand, Secretary of The Holy Synod

- | | |
|---|---|
| 9. Mar Abdulahad Rabban,
Bishop of Aqra | 9. Mar Emmanuel Emmanuel,
Bishop of Canada |
| 10. Mar George Garmo,
Archbishop of Mosul
(Died in Oct- 99) | 10. Mar Odisho Oraham,
Bishop of Europe |
| 11. Mar Ibrahim Ibrahim,
Bishop of the USA | |
| 12. Mar Yousif Sarraf,
Bishop of Cairo | |
| 13. Mar Yousif Thomas,
Archbishop of Beirut (died) | |
| 14. Mar Thomas Meram,
Archbishop of Urmia and Salmas | |
| 15. Mar Antonie Audo,
Bishop of Aleppo | |
| 16. Mar Ramzi Garmo,
Archbishop of Tehran | |
| 17. Mar Gabriel Kassab,
Archbishop of Basra | |

APPENDIX 4

Holy Synod Of April 1999

The Seventh Holy Synod of the year of our Lord 1999

The Seventh Holy Synod of the Church of the East convened under the chairmanship of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch in Chicago from 19th to 27th of April 1999. And the prelates present were:

His Grace Mar Narsai debaz, Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria and all Europe, patriarchal representative

His Grace Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of all India.

His Grace Mar Gewarges Slewa, Metropolitan of Iraq and Russia

His Lordship Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of Western USA

His Lordship Mar Bawai Soro, Bishop of Seattle and secretary of inter-church relations

His Lordship Mar Meelis Zaia, Bishop of Australia and New Zealand, secretary of the Holy Synod

His Lordship Mar Emmanuel, Bishop of Canada

His Lordship Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe.

The session of the Holy Synod was opened by a prayer, and then His Holiness addressed the synod and asked the prelates to work together and harder for the progress and success of the holy Church of the East

He also informed the Synod that His Grace Mar Timotheus Metropolitan and Patriarchal representative was unable to attend and participate due to his old age and difficulties of long travel, and that Mar Sargis, bishop of Baghdad also was unable to attend due to his busy schedule. Both prelates sent their letters of blessings and confirm their pre-approval of all the decisions taken by the Synod for the benefit of the Church of the East.

Meanwhile a joint prayer was offered to the Lord for the health of H. G. Mar Timotheus Metropolitan, beseeching Him to bestow His loving kind-

ness on Mar Timotheus giving him health and strength to continue his work for the holy Church. A prayer also, was offered to the late Mar Poulos, who passed away in 1998. The Synod beseeched the Lord Jesus Christ to count him among the faithful and grant him the joy of his kingdom of heaven, for all the good deeds he offered to the Church of the East in India for the past many years.

Then the Synod decreed the following:

1. That His Holiness will write to the Iraqi government requesting permission to hold a grand celebration in the ancient city of Seleucia Ctesiphon on the occasion of the new millennium of Christianity. This celebration is to take place in the said city between October and November 2000. And His Grace Mar Gewargis Sliwa, Metropolitan of Iraq, will deliver this letter to the Iraqi authority and will commence preparations for the celebration.

2. The Holy Synod of the Church of the East will appoint a sub-committee, to work on the updating and changing of the Synodical laws of the Church of the East concerning inheritance. This is done in order to bring the inheritance laws of the Church in conformity with the laws of the countries where the members of the Church are living specifically those in the Middle East.

3. It was resolved, that Rev. Father Khamis Hurmizd Yosip be consecrated Bishop for the diocese of Dohok, Iraq, and also be responsible for the affairs of the Church in Russia. His see will be in the city of Dohok northern Iraq. And that Rev. Father Aprim Gewargis Athniel be consecrated Bishop to Syria and his See will be in the city of Hassake, Syria.

4. It was decreed that the diocese of Western United States be divided into two dioceses.

A. Diocese of Seattle, Washington, and its surrounding, headed by His Lordship Mar Bawai Soro. His jurisdiction covers Sacramento, San Jose, Sanfrancisco and Seattle.

B. Diocese of Western USA headed by His Lordship Mar Aprim Khamis. His jurisdiction covers all Modesto, Ceres, Turlock, Los Angeles, Orange County and Arizona.

5. It was decreed that new by-laws be prepared to all the dioceses of the Church of the East worldwide. These by laws, to be approved by the Holy Synod under the supremacy of H.H. the Catholicos Patriarch, and used by all the dioceses of the Church of the East.

6. Due to unlawful divisions taking place every now and then in some parishes within certain diocese of the east. It is decreed that every prelate in his diocese, has the mandate to take the necessary steps, and work to protect the rights of the Church and its members who are under his pastoral care. And this is accordance with the Canon laws of the Church of the East and its requirements.

7. It was decreed that the second Sunday of the month of July every year, be dedicated in the Church calendar to the memory of the late Mar Yosip Khananisho Metropolitan of Iraq born in 1893, and passed away on July 3rd 1977 in Baghdad, Iraq. May his memory be of blessing.

8. The Holy Synod confirmed and accepted all the prelates and clergy of our brothers in the Old Calendar Church in accordance with their orders, from Patriarch to reader. And we suggest setting up a joint committee from the prelates of both sides. And as soon as possible, it works together, in order to bring into reality a full union between both sides. And from this day our Churches will be available to them without any distinction or hindrance. Therefore, the decree will be delivered to H.H. Mar Addai II by H.G. Mar Narsai Metropolitan.

These decrees were confirmed and approved by the signature of all the prelates present on the twenty seventh day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ninety nine,

Mar Dinkha IV
Catholicos Patriarch

Mar Narsai de Baz
Metropolitan of Lebanon

Mar Aprem
Metropolitan of India

Mar Geewargis Sliwa
Metropolitan of Iraq

Mar Aprim Khamis
Bishop of Western USA

Mar Bawai Soro
Bishop of Seattle

Mar Meelis Zaia
Bishop of Australia & NZ

Mar Emmanuel
Bishop of Canada

Mar Odisho Oraham
Bishop of Europe

Glory be to God

APPENDIX-5

Sacraments In The Syriac Tradition

Communique

Building on the three earlier Non-Official Consultations on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition, PRO ORIENTE (Vienna) had invited participants from nine different Churches of the Syriac tradition to meet together from 29 Feb to 2 March 2000 for a Study Seminar, on the topic of Sacraments in the Syriac Tradition.

At this Study Seminar the East Syriac tradition was represented by

- the Church of the East (Assyrian Church of the East and Ancient Church of the East).
- the Chaldean Church and
- the Syro-Malabar Church, and
- the West Syriac tradition by
- the Maronite Church,
- the Syrian Catholic Church,
- the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and
- the Malankara Catholic Church.

Unfortunately the participant from the Syrian Orthodox Church, HE Mor Gregorios Yuhanon Ibrahim, was prevented by ill health from attending and giving his paper in person.

All the participants take the opportunity to express their profound thanks to the PRO ORIENTE Foundation and to its staff for organizing and arranging the Seminar, and for continuing the most valuable work of PRO ORIENTE after the much lamented death of its President, Mr Alfred Stirnemann. The participants wished to express their profound appreciation of all the work of Mr Alfred Stirnemann, as General Secretary and then President of PRO ORIENTE in the service of ecumenical relations.

It was a special privilege for the Seminar to have HE Cardinal Franz Konig, the Founder of PRO ORIENTE, present on the first day to open the pro-

ceedings, and to have present at lunch on the second day HE Cardinal Christoph Schonborn, Archbishop of Vienna and Chairman of the Supreme Board of PRO ORIENTE, and the Acting President of PRO ORIENTE, Dr. Johann Marte. It was also an honour for the members of the Seminar to be invited to a reception by His Excellency the Ambassador of Lebanon, William Habib. They would also like to thank the staff of Pallotti Haus for their friendly welcome and hospitality.

In the course of the Study Seminar five papers were read and there was good opportunity to discuss the issues raised by them at length. The titles of the papers read were:

Understanding the Sacraments in the Church of the East (Mar Bawai Soro);

- Maronite Sacramental Theology (Fr. Elias Khalife-Hachem); Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist in the Church of the East (Chorbishop Michael J. Birnie);
- The Sacrament of Initiation (Baptism) in the West Syrian Tradition (Fr. Johns Abraham Konat);
- Sacraments of Initiation in the Syro-Malabar Church (Fr. Joseph Chalassery).

The subject for the first day was “Sacraments in General”. The Syriac term corresponding to “sacrament” is *raza* (East Syriac), *rozo* (West Syriac), but since the connotations and range of meaning of this term are far closer to those of the Greek *mysterion*, it might be preferable, in certain contexts at least, to represent *raza/rozo* as “Mystery”, rather than “Sacrament”, or to leave it in transliteration. Although Syriac *raza/rozo* can just mean “secret”(as in the Aramaic of the Book of Daniel), there are two main religious contexts where it has a technical sense; in exegesis it corresponds approximately to “type”, “symbol” (in the patristic sense of the word where an ontological link is understood as existing between the symbol and the reality it symbolizes), and in liturgy, where the (plural) *raze/roze* are par

excellence the Eucharistic Mysteries. In both cases *raza/rozo* denotes a visible sign endowed with a “hidden power” (St. Ephrem) which, in the case of the *raze/roze* in Scripture and in the natural world, serves as a vehicle for the disclosure of a divine reality, and, in the case of the Eucharistic Mysteries (*Qurbana/Qurbano*) as a means and vehicle of salvation.

In a liturgical context, originally the term *roze/raze* was confined to the Eucharistic Mysteries: since baptism concluded with these, this (together with forgiveness of sins and holy oil) was effectively included in this overall term. In the light of his understanding, which was common to all the Syriac Churches prior to the divisions of the fifth and following centuries, the liturgical *raze/roze* were confined to these Mysteries par excellence, these being the *raze/roze* which provided the means for salvation for the entire Christian community, effected through the ministry of the ordained priesthood. Later, however, and perhaps under the influence of Dionysius the Areopagite (late 5th century), the term *raza/rozo* came to be extended in a liturgical context to other liturgical rites, although the identity of these differed between the different Syriac traditions, and sometimes within the same tradition. Thus, in the Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic and Maronite Churches the term was extended to refer also to the Myron, and in the Church of the East to the Malka, or Holy Leaven. In the various medieval enumerations of *raze/roze* there is no regular fixed number given, although under later western influence the symbolic figure of seven sometimes became the norm; even so, the contents of these lists was not uniformly fixed among the Syriac Churches.

One of the consequences of the difference in connotation between the terms sacrament and *raza/rozo* was that the Syriac tradition as such has never developed an equivalent of western sacramental theology or any clear distinction between sacraments and sacramentals.

Despite a number of outward differences, there is no essential difference from western tradition in the basic understanding of the underlying meaning and theological content of the various sacraments/*raze/roze*.

Sacraments are celebrations of *mdabramutha/ mdabronutho* (Economy of Salvation), namely God's plan in Jesus Christ to save humanity by offering his divine grace through those rites which the Church recognizes as holy *raze/roze*. Jesus Christ by his own sacrifice on the Cross made atonement for our sins and brought about reconciliation with God. Thus he brings God's forgiveness and redemption to the world and renews God's covenant with all humanity. Through the celebration of *raze/roze* the Church is built up as the Body of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The believer is given participation in the death and resurrection of Christ and in the life of the Kingdom to come. A distinctive emphasis of the Church of the East is the following: the work of the Holy Spirit simultaneously confers the earnest of immortality and empowers the human person to deal with sin successfully and live in obedience before God.

The topic for discussion on the second day was "The Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist)". It emerged very clearly that this western terminology, with Sacraments in the plural, did not correspond to the situation in the Syriac tradition, where historically the rite incorporated all three elements into a single celebration, in particular, there was no separation between the baptismal immersion and the post-immersion anointing (to which the later western notion of Confirmation corresponds).

In the case of both the Baptismal Rite and the Eucharistic Mysteries it is important to treat the rite as a whole, and not as distinct units in an excessively analytical manner; thus it is misleading to try to isolate particular moments when (for example) the gift of the spirit is conferred in Baptism, or whether it is the Institution Narrative or the Epiclesis which effects the consecration.

Special mention was made of the richness of the symbolism of baptism in the Syriac tradition and the close connection between Christian baptism and the baptism of Christ in the Jordan. Among those elements considered in the papers, particularly significant were the entrance of the newly-bap-

tized into the life of the Holy Trinity, and their incorporation into the full life of the Church. It was also noted that all the Syriac communities use the reading from St. John's Gospel (2:23-3:8) in the baptismal rite, where the emphasis is on the "new birth" of the baptized, though eventually St. Paul's emphasis on death and resurrection in baptism was incorporated within the tradition as well.

An important point which was noted, but not further explored, was the fact that on occasion interaction between the liturgical rites of the different Syriac Churches still took place after the divisions between them had occurred.

The participants strongly encourage PRO ORIENTE to continue the most valuable initiative of a dialogue within the Syriac Tradition. For future consideration and study they suggest the following as possible topics:

- Rites which are identified and listed differently as *raze/roze* by the individual Syriac Churches (Penance, Marriage, Anointing of the sick, Holy Leaven, Myron, Sign of the Cross).
- the interaction between the different liturgical traditions and their consequences,
- the theology and practice of mission in the Churches of the Syriac tradition in both historical and contemporary experience.
- Priesthood.

In conclusion, this was a unique and most useful opportunity, provided by PRO ORIENTE, for members of the different Churches of Syriac tradition to discuss and learn directly from each other about each others' understanding of the subject of the Study Seminar. It was extremely gratifying to discover the large amount of agreement between the traditions of the different Syriac Churches over essentials.

APPENDIX 6

List Of The Prelates Of The Church Of The East In October 2000 AD

1. His Holiness Khannania Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch
2. His Grace Mar Timotheus, Patriarchal Representative in India*
3. His Grace Mar Narsai de Baz, Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria and Europe
4. His Grace Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of All India
5. His Grace Mar Geewargis Sliwa, Metropolitan of Iraq
6. His Lordship Mar Yosip Sargis, Episcopa, Baghdad
7. His Lordship Mar Aprim Khamis, Episcopa of Arizona & Southern California
8. His Lordship Mar Bawai Soro, Bishop of Seattle & Northern California
9. His Lordship Mar Meelis Zaia, Bishop of Australia & NZ, Secretary, Holy Synod
10. His Lordship Mar Emmanuel Emmanuel, Bishop of Canada
11. His Lordship Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe (headquarters: Sweden)
12. His Lordship Mar Aprim Athniel, Bishop of Syria
13. His Lordship Mar Is'haq Yosip, Northern Iraq (Dohuk, Arbil) & Russia

* His Grace Mar Timotheus died on August 6, 2001.

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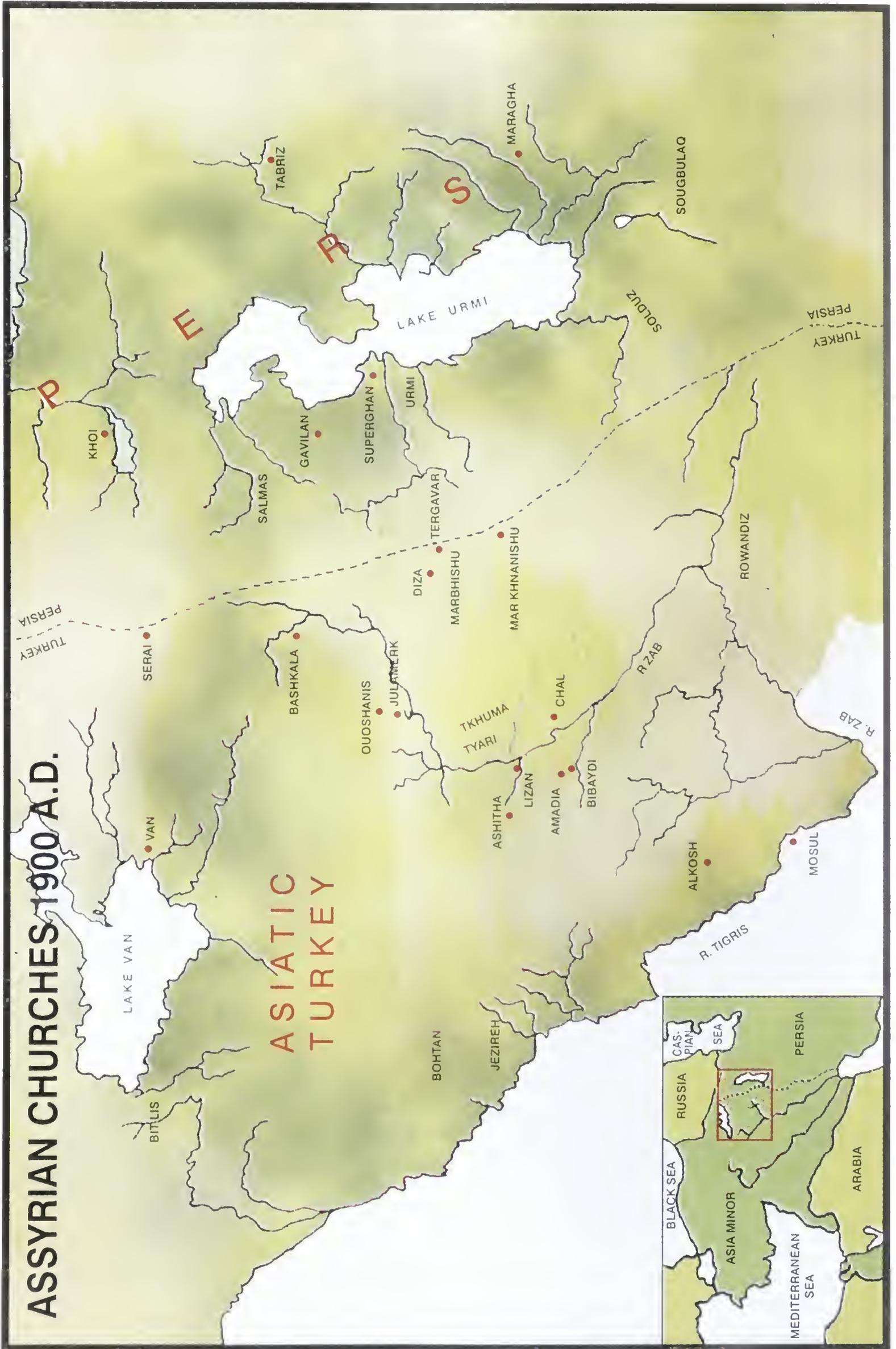
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| 61. | Syriac Manuscripts in India |
| 62. | Advanced Aramaic |

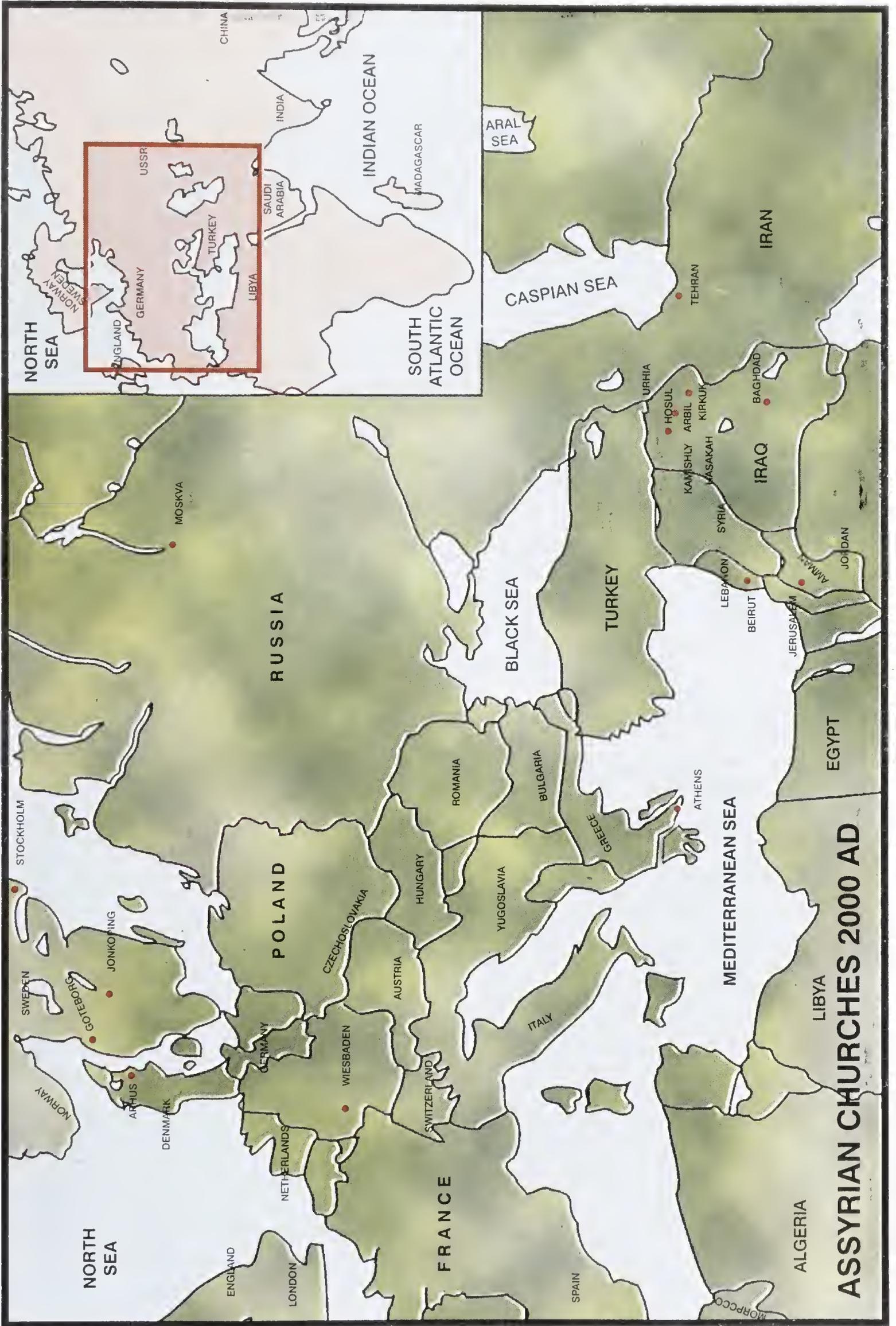


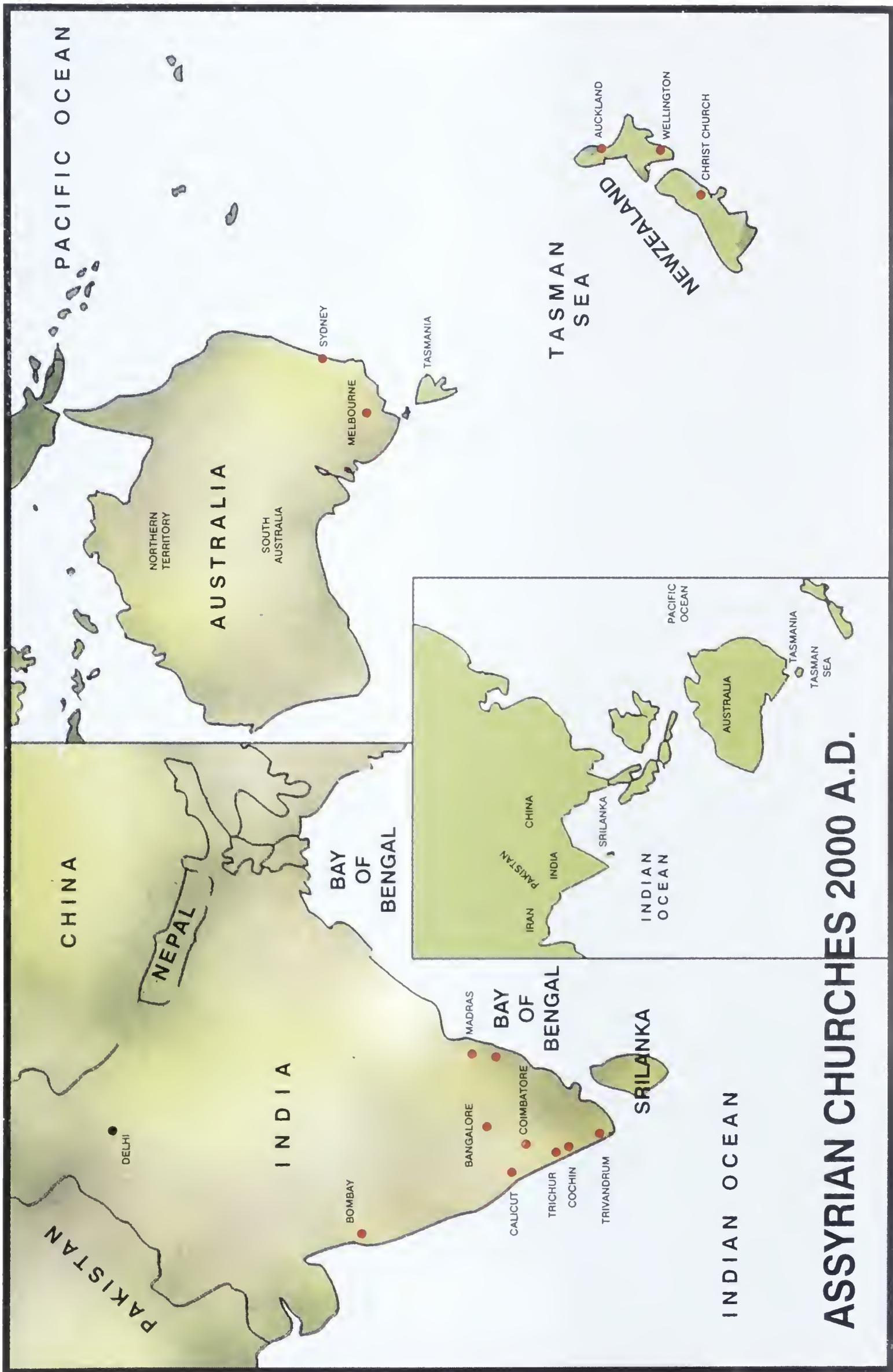
ASSYRIAN CHURCHES 600 A.D.

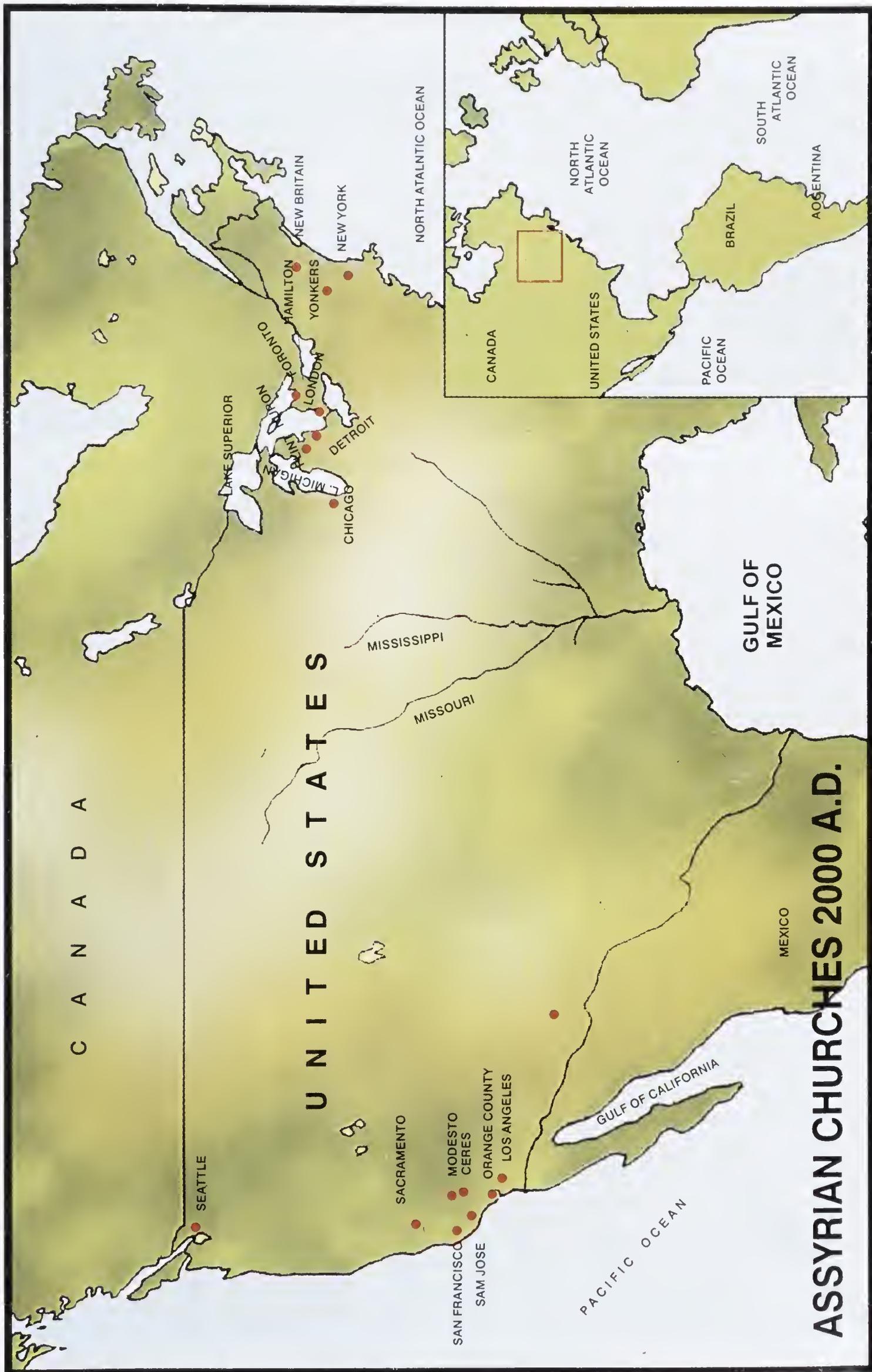
ASSYRIAN CHURCHES 1900 A.D.

ASIATIC TURKEY









LATE PATRIARCHS & METROPOLITANS



MAR RUVIL SHIMON XX
29 MARCH 1903



MAR BENYAMIN SHIMUN XXI
16 MARCH 1918



MAR PAULOSE SHIMUN XXII
9 MAY 1920



MAR ESHAI SHIMUN XXIII
6 NOVEMBER 1975



MAR ISAAC KHANANISHU
1918



MAR YOSIP KHANANISHU
3 JULY 1977



MAR ABDISHO
16 NOVEMBER 1900



MAR ABIMALEK TIMOTHEUS
30 APRIL 1945



MAR TOMA DARMO
7 SEPTEMBER 1969



MAR TIMOTHEUS II
6 AUGUST 2001

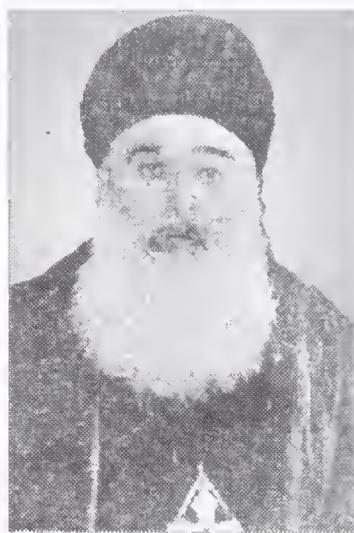
LATE EPISCOPAS



MAR GORIEL
MURDERED 1898



MAR ISHOYAV OF DURİ
JOINED CHALDEAN CHURCH
IN 1903



MAR ZAIA SARGIS
12 MAY 1951



MAR DINKHA EPISCOPA
SHOT DEAD IN FEBRUARY 1915



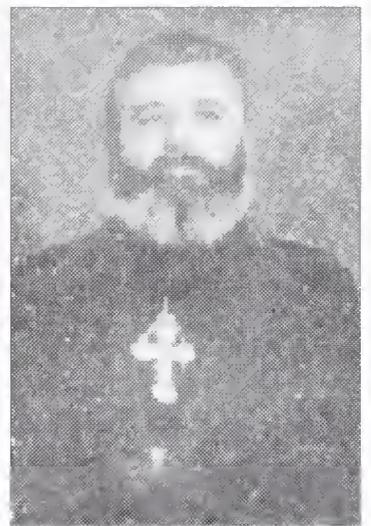
MAR APREM DAVID
CONSECRATED IN 1909



MAR ELIA ABOONA
JOINED CHALDEAN CHURCH
IN 1921. DIED IN 1955



MAR YALDA YAWALAHA
18 NOVEMBER 1950



MAR ISHO SARGIS
19 DECEMBER 1966



MAR ANDREOS YAWALAHA
17 JUNE 1973



MAR YOHANNAN
PHILIPOSE
7 AUGUST 1976



MAR AURAHAM YOHANNAN
14 APRIL 1985



PAULOSE MAR POULOSE
24 MARCH 1998

Prelates of The Church Today



H.H. MARAN MAR DINKHA IV
120th Catholicos Patriarch of Church of The East



MAR NARSAI DE BAZ
Metropolitan, Lebanon



MAR APREM
Metropolitan, India



MAR GEEVARGHESE SLEEVA
Metropolitan, IROQ



MAR YOSIP Sargis
Bishop, Bagdad



MAR APRIM KHAMIS
Bishop, Western USA



MAR BAWAI SORO
Bishop, Seattle



MAR MEELIS ZAIA
Bishop, Australia



MAR EMMANUEL
Bishop, Canada



MAR ODISHO ORAHAM
Bishop, Europe



MAR APRIM ATHANIEL
Bishop, Syria



MAR ISSAC YOSIP
Bishop, Dohuk & Russia

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem (formerly George Mookken) was born in Trichur, Kerala, India, in June 1940. Educated in India, England and America, he specialised in Church History. He was the President of the Church History Association of India. (1976 - 82)

He holds two master's degrees in Church History, one from the United Theological College, Bangalore (M. Th., of Serampore, 1966) and the other from the Union Theological Seminary, New York (S.T.M. degree, 1967). He was a candidate for Doctor of Theology (Th.D.) degree at Princeton Theological Seminary, U.S.A., when he was consecrated bishop in Baghdad, Iraq in 1968. Later he earned his D.Th. degree from Serampore University, near Calcutta in 1976.

Ordained a deacon on June 25, 1961, he became a priest on the day he completed twenty five years of age on 13 June, 1965. He was consecrated Bishop on 21st September, 1968 and promoted as a Metropolitan eight days later in Baghdad.

His biography appears in the **International Who's Who of Intellectuals**, Vol. 6, Cambridge, the **International directory of Distinguished Leadership**, first Edition, U.S.A. and others.

He was given 'Men of Achievement' Award of the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England in 1984, and the 'Medal of Merit' of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Centre, Venice for his cultural and ecumenical achievements.

Since 1968, he is the Head of the Church of the East in India with his headquarters in Trichur. He is active in several religious and social organisations all over India. He is the co-chairman of the dialogue between the Assyrian Church and the Secretariat for Christian Unity, Vatican.

PUBLICATIONS OF SEERI

1. **THE HARP**: A review of Syriac and Oriental Studies, 3 issues a year. Vols. I-IX 1987-96., Vol.X 1997., Vols. XI and XII 1999., Vol. XIII 2000, Vol. XIV 2001, Vol. XV 2002.
- II. **'MORAN ETHO'** : Monograph Series : Occasional Publication
 1. **Wolfgang Hage** (University of Marburg, Germany) : Syriac Christianity in the East, 1988.
 2. **Sebastian P. Brock** (Oxford University, U.K.) : Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition, 1989.
 3. **J.P.M. van der Ploeg** (University of Neijmegen, The Netherlands): The Book of Judith, Syriac Text and English Translation, 1991.
 4. **Sebastian P. Brock** : Burial service for Nuns (West Syrian Liturgy). Syriac Text with translation, 1992.
 5. **Paul S. Russel** (U.S.A.) : St. Ephraem the Syrian and St. Gregory the Theologian Confront the Arians, 1994.
 6. **Sebastian P. Brock** : Bride of Light, 1994.
 7. **Sidney H. Griffith** (The Catholic University of America): Syriac Writers on Muslims and the Religious Challenge of Islam, 1995.
 8. **Alison Salvesen** (Oxford): The Exodus Commentary of St. Ephrem, 1995.
 9. **Sebastian P. Brock**: A Brief outline of Syriac Literature, 1997.
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 18. **Mar Aprem**: History of the Assyrian Church in the 20th Century, 2003.